

**Young speakers of Mexican indigenous languages: contesting language  
ideologies and policies**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool  
for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by **Lucia Tina Brandi**

August 2018

## **Declaration**

This work is original and has not been submitted previously in support of any degree,  
qualification or course

All sentences and passages quoted from published sources have been specifically  
acknowledged by referencing to author, work and page(s).

---

Lucia Brandi

## Abstract

### Young speakers of Mexican indigenous languages: contesting language ideologies and policies

In Mexico, the institutionalisation of language rights is reconfiguring discourses of indigeneity. Cultural and linguistic diversity are increasingly reframed as national patrimony, and generic notions of indigeneity firmly embedded into national identity. While such discourses coincide with global concern at language endangerment, they are better contextualised as policy responses to social unrest which, from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, has been effective in instrumentalising linguistic and cultural identity as a mobilising factor.

This study is set in the highlands of central Mexico, in a stronghold of indigenous Totonac language and culture, and moreover, with a unique and recent history of social and cultural mobilisation. The study deconstructs prevailing language ideologies and policies, and analyses how local language management, especially in education, healthcare and policing, is perceived by young (16-25) bilingual speakers of Totonac and Spanish. The objective is to unpack conditions and processes which function in the valorisation of a linguistic culture, and more importantly, in its social and linguistic well-being or conversely, its minoritisation.

Chapter 1 provides theoretical contextualisation, discussing research objectives, key informative concepts such as language valorisation and minoritisation, and arguing that *buen vivir*, or holistic sociolinguistic well-being, best serves as barometer and objective of language policy. Chapter 2 analyses the post-independence socio-linguistic environment in Mexico, reviews research on Totonac language and culture, and constructs a recent social history of Huehuetla/Kgoyom. This focuses on the agency of the *Organización Independiente Totonaca*, which, this thesis argues, has definitively shaped local sociolinguistic context. Methodology and decolonising research praxis are discussed in Chapter 3, alongside this study's community engagement. The greater part of the thesis is dedicated to analysis of findings (in Chapter 4), allowing space for reflection on the theorisation of local, experiential experts. After extrapolating the implications of this analysis for wider theory, and considering application to language policy (Chapter 5), the thesis then concludes (Chapter 6) by reviewing how ideologies and policies of language are informed by the expertise of young bicultural speakers of Totonac and Mexican indigenous languages.

A distinctive feature of this study is its simultaneous community engagement project, which has published the first mainstream children's text in Kgoyom Totonac. The talking storybook (*Tsikan chu Nipxi' / La Viejita y la Calabaza / Buri and the Marrow*) combines text and audio in Totonac, Spanish and English, and offers a resource for local literacy and language maintenance, and exposure for an understudied language. It was produced in collaboration with the only independent, Totonac-led high school *Colegio Paulo Freire*, Totonac language maintenance caucus *Xtachuwín Kinkachikinkan Xa Akgtutu Nakú* and UK-based children's publishers Mantra Lingua (see Appendix 1).

## Acknowledgements

This PhD was made possible by a scholarship of the E. Allison Peers Fund, administered by the University of Liverpool, for which I am sincerely grateful, with thanks to former trustee, Prof. Chris Harris, for encouraging me to apply. I also gratefully acknowledge a research grant towards fieldwork from The Society of Latin American Studies (SLAS), and support from both institutions to present papers on this research at conferences in London, Manchester, Newcastle and Cambridge.

Very many academic and support staff at the University of Liverpool have facilitated my studies, including from the libraries, computer and facilities services, and PGR administration. I wish to thank them again here, as I hope I have done in our personal encounters. I am very appreciative of the Disability Support Team, without whose assistance I could not have undertaken study, and on a personal note, the university's Catholic chaplaincy team, who create an inspirational and hospitable faith community of constancy and unconditional support. I studied part-time over many years whilst I worked, and saw various changes in my supervision. I therefore specifically mention Prof. Kate Marsh, Faculty Director of Postgraduate Research, for her personal commitment to my interests. I very gratefully acknowledge the contribution of my final supervisory team, Prof. Robert Blackwood, who assumed the lead in its second year and remained until its conclusion, and Prof. Claire Taylor of Hispanic Studies, who joined in its final year. Prof. Blackwood is co-editor of the journal *Linguistic Landscape*, has published widely on Corsican sociolinguistics and language policy, language and new media, and the linguistic landscape of Mediterranean coastal cities, most recently contributing to the 2016 *Oxford Handbook of Language and Society*. Prof. Claire Taylor is Gilmour Chair of Spanish, publishing widely on Latin (o) American literature and (digital) culture, such as hypertext novels, e-poetry and net art, including the 2014 monograph *Place and Politics in Latin American Digital Culture: Location and Latin American Net Art*. Although secondary supervisor, her commitment has been complete. I also acknowledge the many members of MLC academic staff who have generously commented on sections of this work, either as chapters or as seminar papers, during annual and final PGR reviews, and I reiterate the thanks which I have expressed to each one individually for such time and attention.

In Huehuetla/Kgoyom I am indebted to the parents, governors and alumni of the Colegio Paulo Freire (CPF), its teaching staff and supporters, with special mention of the school director Edmundo Barrios. He has built a site of learning excellence on the foundation stone laid by his predecessor, the late Griselda Tirado, who gave her life to the aspirations of Totonac young people and their families. I am indebted to the informant researcher team at CPF for their exemplary dedication, and all the CPF students who inspired this project and have generously collaborated in it. Similarly, I would like to thank the vice-chancellor of the Universidad Intercultural del Estado de Puebla (UIEP) Alibert Sánchez Jiménez for his unfailing support, and the staff and students of the UIEP past and present for their generous welcome and participation.

In Puebla I gratefully acknowledge the historian and sociolinguist Dr Edmundo Hernández Amador, and his students of Náhuatl at the BUAP University, who generously shared their time and expertise with me. Similarly, I am very grateful to Dr Ramón Patiño Espino of the BUAP, who first introduced me to the CPF and permanently changed my life and studies. Special mention is made of the late Dr

David Brye, friend, travel companion, campaigner and exemplary human being, whose home and library remain a hub for students from the sierra and whose loss is keenly felt by many. I am also indebted to my beloved *poblana* friends who opened their lives and families to me. Although we remain in contact I miss them greatly.

In the production of *Tsikan chu Nipxi* I would like to acknowledge the many members of the translation, artistic and technical teams based at the CPF, and to express again our appreciation to the final editors: poet and CPF Totonac language teacher Prof. Pedro García Hernández; CPF governor and former mayor of Huehuetla/Kgoyom Don Mateo Sánchez; and Totonac-language poet and writer Manuel Sainos. Last but not least, sincere thanks to Robene Dutta and all the team at Mantra Lingua Publishers for unwavering solidarity to this project, with which they launched their “Endangered Language” series of interactive children’s literature. I also very happily acknowledge the solidarity of MLC staff and undergraduate and postgraduate students, and my personal friends who have promoted the book, including with trilingual Totonac / Spanish /English story-telling in Liverpool’s primary schools and central library, and who have supported sales of the book here, which subsidise its free distribution by CPF in Huehuetla/Kgoyom.

Finally, I wish to mention those who have reviewed parts of this work as a personal kindness: Jane Harry for comments on Chapter 1, Dr Ramón Patiño Espino for remarks on Chapter 2, and Dr Michelle Harrison for generous and timely practical assistance. I also reiterate here the thanks I hope I have expressed privately to my personal friends and family, to my university colleagues in both MLC and the ELC, and to my fellow student friends and office-mates for their precious friendship and support over the years, and to whom I also wish every happiness and success.

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of Manolo Olmos García, alumnus of the CPF, from the community of Lipuntahuaca, Huehuetla/Kgoyom. Totonac poet, writer, student, worker, son, brother, research participant, informant researcher, role-model and beloved friend. Manolo died far too young, but not before having inaugurated the First International Panel of Totonac Poetry at the 2014 International Poetry Congress celebrated at the BUAP University in Puebla, with a recital of his work, together with Lourdes García and Pedro García of CPF. Manolo lives on forever in our memory and in the hearts of so many persons whose words, like his own, are contained within the pages of this thesis.

All sources have been acknowledged and no source is knowingly omitted; I accept responsibility for any oversights, inconsistencies or inaccuracies. All translations (and hence any errors) contained within this thesis are my own.

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	4
Table of Contents	6
List of Figures	8
Acronyms	9
<b>Chapter 1: Theoretical context</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction to the thesis</b>	<b>10</b>
• Research questions and data	12
• Key concepts: overview	13
<b>1.1 Deconstructing language ideologies and policies</b>	<b>15</b>
• Contextual language management and valorisation	15
• Valorisation and the endangerment of linguistic cultures	21
<b>1.2 Deconstructing societal multilingualism</b>	<b>33</b>
• Multilingualism and valorisation	33
• Valorisation and Minoritisation	41
<b>1.3 Conclusion: ideologies and policies of language diversity</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Social and linguistic context</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>2.0 Introduction to social and linguistic context</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>2.1 National historic context</b>	<b>47</b>
• <i>Desindianizar al mexicano, mexicanizar al indio</i> : MIL and the construction of national identity	
<b>2.2 Contemporary MIL identities: diversity, discourses and speakers</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>2.2.1 Discourses of MIL and Totonac linguistic cultures</b>	<b>67</b>
• Historical Totonac Culture	67
• Recent Academic Discourses of Totonac	70
• Popular discourses of MIL and absence of Totonac	74
<b>2.2.2 Totonac languages today</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>2.3 Local social and linguistic characteristics: Puebla &amp; Huehuetla/Kgoyom</b>	<b>82</b>
• Situating embodied speakers: connecting theory with practices	95
<b>2.4 Conclusion</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Milieu and Methods</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>3.0 Introduction to milieu of fieldwork and methodologies</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>3.1 Research context: social actors and antecedents</b>	<b>103</b>
• Cultural control and public policy: Organización Independiente Totonaca (OIT)	103
• Cultural control and education: CESIK - Colegio Paulo Freire:	108
• Cultural control and paradigmatic power: assassination of CESIK's founder	111
<b>3.2 Research Objectives, scope and limits</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>3.2.1 Participants, instruments and relationships</b>	<b>117</b>
• Reflexivity, objectivity and positionality	122
<b>3.3 Decolonising praxis</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>3.4 Conclusion</b>	<b>128</b>

<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Ideologies and policies of MIL: Analysis of findings</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Linguistic identities: perceptions and policies</b>	<b>131</b>
4.1.2	Determining identities: MIL speakers and the census	141
4.1.3	Valorising MIL: concepts of linguistic rights	149
<b>4.1.4</b>	<b>Conclusion: ideologies, identities and young MIL biculturals</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Language ideologies and policies: language management in the wider environment: introduction</b>	<b>162</b>
4.2.1	Current provision for education in MIL	165
4.2.2	Linguistic rights and education in MIL	177
4.2.3	Linguistic rights and disseminating MIL	181
<b>4.2.4</b>	<b>Conclusion: ideologies and policies of MIL in education</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Language ideologies and policies: MIL and health services</b>	<b>184</b>
4.3.1	Framing public services: identifying language ideologies	187
4.3.2	Identifying language policies: treatment and maltreatment	190
4.3.3	Hypothesising multilingual healthcare	195
<b>4.3.4</b>	<b>Conclusion: ideologies and policies of MIL in healthcare</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Police and civil authorities</b>	<b>202</b>
	• Patterns of response by informants	
4.4.1	Linguistic difference: interaction and inaction	203
	• Linguistic difference: context or pretext?	205
	• (De)valorised language, (de)valorised speakers	211
4.4.2	Hypothesising multilingual policing and justice system: do MIL speakers have rights to demand change?	212
<b>4.4.3</b>	<b>Conclusion: Policing and language and management</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Ideologies and policies of MIL: conclusions</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>Chapter 5:</b>	<b>Discussion and conclusions</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Language policy and MIL skills: bilinguality and the interface with the state</b>	<b>224</b>
5.1.1	Translanguaging, contextual skills and education	227
5.1.2	Alternative cultural models: Colegio Paulo Freire	234
5.1.3	Bilinguality and public services	237
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Language policy and MIL resources: cultural control</b>	<b>245</b>
5.2.1	Patronage and access to the means of text production	246
5.2.2	New media, new actors, new production	251
	• Tsikan chu Nipxi' /la Viejita y la Calabaza/ Buri and the Marrow	251
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Language policy and MIL identities: discourses of 'othering' and linguistic minoritisation</b>	<b>255</b>
5.3.1	Language policy and MIL identities: discourses of change and continuity	261
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Conclusion: implications of research findings in language policy</b>	<b>264</b>
		<b>266</b>
<b>Chapter 6:</b>	<b>Conclusion: contesting language ideologies and policies</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1: <i>Tsikan chu Nipxi</i>	<b>274</b>
Appendix 2: CPF Questionnaire	<b>275</b>
Appendix 3: UIEP Questionnaire	<b>281</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>282</b>

<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure 1.1 shows the fieldwork location of Huehuetla/Kgoyom in central Mexico	<b>10</b>
Figure 1.2 models domains and sub-domains of language management and maintenance based on Landweer's (2012) Indicators of Ethnolinguistic Vitality	<b>20</b>
Figure 2.1 shows the size of the MIL-speaking community in Mexico before and since independence	<b>49</b>
Figure 2.2 shows MIL- use by domain according to the 2010 census	<b>60</b>
Figure 2.3 shows that twice the number of people who speak a MIL choose to define themselves as 'indigenous'	<b>65</b>
Figure 2.4 shows Totonac-Tepehua languages using 2003 typologies and 2011 revisions.	<b>78</b>
Figure 2.5 shows speakers of MIL as a percentage of the Mexican population	<b>83</b>
Figure 2.6 shows MIL diversity in the state of Puebla.	<b>85</b>
Figure 2.7 shows the municipality of Huehuetla, its administrative and commercial centre and outlying communities.	<b>87</b>
Figure 4.1 shows support among the cohort for the use of MIL in business and with new technologies	<b>156</b>
Figure 4.2 shows an aggregation of answers to the open question: 'What opportunities are there currently to receive an education in Totonac [MIL]?'	<b>166</b>
Figure 4.3 shows opinion on MIL-speakers' rights to education in MIL	<b>177</b>
Figure 4.4 shows support for change in language management in healthcare	<b>197</b>
Figure 4.5 shows opinion on whether MIL-speakers have the right to medical attention in MIL, and how far such rights should extend	<b>198</b>
Figure 4.6 shows support for change in language management in policing.	<b>213</b>
Figure 4.7 shows distribution of opinion across the two cohorts in answer to the question: 'should a speaker of Totonac [MIL] have the right to insist that police [civil authorities] either speak to him/her in his/her own language or else provide an interpreter?'	<b>214</b>
Figure 5.1 compares the structure of analysis of findings in Chapter 4 with the structure of discussion of implications in Chapter 5	<b>223</b>
Figure 6.1 models ideologies and policies of MIL on a continuum using policing as an example	<b>269</b>
Figure 6.2 models a template for a consultation process with young MIL-speakers on language policy using education and healthcare as examples	<b>272</b>



## **Acronyms**

CPF	Colegio Paulo Freire
EL	Endangered Languages
INALI	Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas (Mexican National Institute of Indigenous Languages)
INEGI	Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (Mexican National Statistics Office)
KT	Kgoyom Totonac (Totonac spoken in Huehuetla/Kgoyom)
MIL	Mexican Indigenous Languages
OIT	Organización Independiente Totonaca (Independent Totonac Organisation)
RLS	Reversing Language Shift
SEP	Secretaría de Educación Pública (Mexican Ministry of Education)
UIEP	Universidad Intercultural del Estado de Puebla

## Chapter 1.0 Introduction to the thesis

This thesis is positioned within a broad area of sociolinguistic inquiry into languages in situations of endangerment. The location is the largely Totonac-speaking community of Huehuetla/Kgoyom in the *sierra poblana* or rural highlands of Puebla state, central Mexico, which form part of the historic *Totonacapan* or Totonac indigenous linguistic and cultural homeland. The study engages in a contextual deconstruction of language ideologies and policies to analyse the sociolinguistic situation of young (16-25) bicultural speakers of Totonac or other Mexican indigenous languages (henceforth MIL) and Spanish.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1.1 shows Puebla State and the fieldwork location of Huehuetla/Kgoyom in central Mexico<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Bicultural is the preferred term; it need not infer cross-cultural heritage, but does connote cross-cultural communicative capacity, not limited to language. Rather it conveys skill, knowledge, insight and ideation of identity, which straddle two cultures and worldviews, allowing both intra- and inter-cultural communication.

<sup>2</sup> map adapted from Wiki Commons Images

The thesis examines the specificity of this context, before going on to analyse young people's own perceptions of language ideologies and policies in the local environment. Language ideologies include ideas, attitudes and beliefs in which MIL and MIL speakers are implicated, and wider belief systems which inform such ideologies. Similarly, policies are not limited to legislation or the actions and discourses of governmental authorities but extend to any agent and patterns of practice which hold implications for MIL speakers (Mar-Molinero, 2000). As such, language policies include, but are not limited to, language planning and can be framed in explicit terms or as implicit within language acts .

The thesis seeks what can be extrapolated from one specific context and applied to other language groups in similar situations; this is pursued by analysis of both the usefulness of certain theoretical constructs to interpretation of this study's findings, and the theoretical implications of this study's findings for wider debate. An important focus is the discursive construction of national identity post-independence, its political configuration through language policy, and its ideological function in the social distribution of power.

Issues are explored less in terms of abstract, ideational processes, and more in relation to the actions of institutional and individual agents, to shed light on how these function in the communication of language attitudes, and production and positioning of sociolinguistic identities (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991). Specifically, the study seeks to comprehend how language ideologies and policies interconnect in the everyday lived experience of MIL speakers, through perceptual and experiential outcomes in key domains of language management, namely education, healthcare, and policing. More generally, the study unpacks conditions and processes which function in the social and linguistic well-being of a MIL culture, and conversely, in its structural and linguistic minoritisation.

## Research questions and data

Data is drawn from a large sample of young people in post-compulsory education residing in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, who answered lengthy questionnaires, participated in focus groups, interviews, research conversations, and were observed in classroom and social situations. The thesis also collates other primary source data for this under-researched community, including oral histories, participatory observations, and census data.

The first research question concerns contextual analysis of language ideologies and critically assesses decisive factors in the construction of language ideologies:

1.0 To what extent is a deconstruction of language ideologies and policies usefully informed by notions of language valorisation and minoritisation? In what ways do language ideologies function in the valorisation and minoritisation of an endangered language community (such as Totonac and other MIL) in specific domains of language management, namely education, healthcare and policing?

This question is addressed by a review of existing research in Chapter 1 (theoretical context), by research into local context in Chapter 2 (social and linguistic context) and Chapter 3 (milieu and methods); by analysis of findings from informants (Chapter 4) and by their further discussion in relation to current debates in Chapter 5 (Discussion and Implications).

The second question concerns the contextual implications of language ideologies and policies:

2.0 To what extent can concepts of cultural control and *buen vivir* usefully inform ideologies and policies of language management, and the formulation of language policy in education, healthcare and policing? How far is the management of MIL resources and skills implicated in the well-being of MIL speakers?

This question is addressed in the discussion (Chapter 5) which extracts conclusions concerning the implications of informant findings that have been analysed in Chapter 4 (Findings and Analysis).

In this study's deconstruction of social and linguistic context (Chapter 2) a recurrent theme that emerges is that Totonac speakers are overlooked, and there is a need for more research on contemporary Totonac cultures and languages. Inattention to a MIL culture (as much as attention) also constitutes policy, given that a lack of concern (political or academic) contains ideological origins and consequences.

The third research question concerns decolonising praxis in policy and research, especially context-sensitive processes. It critically assesses the agents and actions implicated in the formulation of language policy and conduct of research processes.

1.0 To what extent can language research and policy in a post-independence, rural, indigenous, endangered language context engage with decolonising praxis? How can the theorisation and experiential expertise of young MIL biculturals inform methodologies and decision-making? What implications arise from an engagement with minoritised social actors in language research and policy?

This final question is addressed in discussion of the principles and procedures of this study's methodology in Chapter 3 (Research Milieu and Methods), and in the wider discussion in Chapter 5 (Discussion and Implications) which arises from analysis of findings, particularly regarding the identity and agency of contextual actors implicated in language policy.

### **Key concepts: overview**

Indivisible from this context is the ideological and political legacy of European colonialism. The theoretical paradigms of colonialism continue to be detected in concepts of local identities, languages and cultures in the present day, and notably in their relative valorisation. Such valorisation or the social and linguistic esteem in which a language (and by extension, its speakers) is held, relative to others or a dominant code, is closely interconnected with motivations for language use, acquisition, transmission and maintenance (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). This doctoral study deconstructs processes which function in the valorisation of MIL cultures, relative to Spanish-speaking Mexican national cultural identity, constructed in the aftermath of European conquest and midst of New World threats.<sup>3</sup> Discussion of the

---

<sup>3</sup> That is, *mestizo* identity; fuller discussion of Mexican national culture and identity follows in Chapter 2.1.

valorisation of language is expanded to the related concept of the minoritisation of linguistic cultures, or how a linguistic culture can acquire the relative status of a minority in a given socio-historical context, regardless of its number of speakers

Being minoritised has been defined as ‘a relationship rather than a characteristic; it presupposes that (an)other group(s) has/have been majoritised’ (Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty 2008:7). Minoritisation therefore encapsulates a range of social and linguistic processes and guides this doctoral study towards uncovering how these factors interact to diminish the status of a linguistic culture, thereby jeopardising its well-being.

The study also seeks to engage with decolonising research praxis in intellectual and methodological terms. For example, it observes the linguistic culture’s norms of reciprocity by entering into a quid pro quo arrangement with informants; it also acknowledges the lifetime benefit to the researcher of the study and pursues an enduring and tangible outcome for the language community.<sup>4</sup> In terms of research foci, interrogation is included of the premises, forms and purposes of academic enquiry into languages and cultures in post-independence contexts that identify/are identified as indigenous. It posits the inappropriateness of certain intellectual constructs, such as language shame, to refer to the contextual behaviours of minoritised language communities and explores the structural minoritisation of MIL communities as a function of devalorising discourses of MIL speakers.

Conversely, the thesis acknowledges the usefulness of conceptual frameworks which are designed for the kind of rural subsistence context familiar to many indigenous language situations, namely Landweer’s (2012) Indicators of Ethnolinguistic Vitality or IEV, and conceptual tools which facilitate analysis of the impact of language ideologies and policies on the well-being of situated, embodied speakers, since endangered language research must address more than the preservation of speech forms. To this end, the thesis borrows Bonfil Batalla’s (1983) characterisation of cultural control, the sociological concept of pluralities of violence, and the Latin American indigenous-informed paradigm of *buen vivir* or community well-being.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> For example, the commercial production of a talking trilingual storybook for literacy and fundraising purposes; for fuller discussion see methods in Chapter 3.

<sup>5</sup> Fuller discussion of these concepts will follow shortly in this chapter (1).

## **Chapter 1.1 Deconstructing language ideologies and policies**

### **Contextual language management and valorisation**

In order to address the issue of language ideologies and policies, it is first necessary to define and discuss contextual language management, especially when exploring the intersection of language management and valorisation processes. Care is required with the concept of ‘management’ since this can imply control or conscious planning. Rather, management can be approached in terms of actual processes, relationships and outcomes, rather than formal structures and plans (Zundel, 2010). Management is fundamentally processual in nature, formed as much by reactive, interactive, informal or less-conscious decision-making, as by intentions and directions, or formal planning (Zundel, 2010). Once management is conceived as comprised of ‘patterns in a stream of actions’ (Mintzberg, 1990a:45) then research can focus more on identifying and interpreting emergent action, and less on tracing the sequential formulation and implementation of plans. This guards against holding notions about the identity of managers, or nature of management policies, which are too rigid or static.

It also legitimises smaller-scale and qualitative studies, which focus on deconstructing or disentangling processes and relationships. In this respect, this doctoral study can be conceptualised as an unpicking of threads (comprised of language beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, and valorisation) from patterns of language policies (formed by behaviours, choices, and practices) within a highly dynamic context.

In such deconstruction, the paradigm proposed by Spolsky (2009), which stresses the domains and purposes of language management, provides an analytical tool. Speech domains have been defined as ‘a sociocultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication, in accord with the institutions of a society and the spheres of a speech community’ (Fishman, 1972:442). For example, the home, school, or the workplace each represents discrete speech domains and sites of language management and managers. Language management in domains will modify according to the language management norms of these different domains. Such norms tend to extend to the conceptual terrain of domains so that certain topics are

more congruent with the domain (and identity of interlocutor) than others.

Additionally, key variables such as the identity of participants and the nature of the relationship between them (its affective character and the relative distribution of power) are highly determinant of language management in domains. As such, a multiplicity of sub-domains can form, meaning a single physical space can host multiple domains of language management: for example, peer interaction in the school playground emerges as one domain of language management, while pupil/teacher interaction in the classroom is another.

Importantly, Spolsky's model emphasises how communicative purposes constitute a key variable in domains of language management. The intentions of each participant may be apparent in the surface-level linguistic and phonological forms of a speech event (i.e. what or how something is said); just as important, they may require contextual analysis to deduce meaning from when or where or to whom something is expressed. In this way, the personal motives, beliefs, and attitudes of participants enter the analysis: informed by wider language ideologies pertinent to their formation, responsive to social and interpersonal relationships between interlocutors, cognisant of domains and performative of identities, these purposes are expressed in linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours and contextualised by normative policies. Consequently, research into language management can address the range of variables and contextual factors implicated, the myriad configurations of speech events and domains where choices are exercised and seek to clarify the purposes of language management in a given domain.

In this respect, Spolsky's emphasis on communicative purposes as a definitive element of speech domains lends itself to consideration of the relationship of attitudes or intentions to ensuing language acts and outcomes. It affirms the interconnectedness of identities, social relationships, and communicative purposes in determining patterns of language management. This perspective conducts the researcher towards a greater scrutiny of the social context to language domains, the ideological formation of interlocutors and the norms of behaviours and policies associated with such domains.

That said, an important limitation of the model is its construction of what appears to be an inventory of higher-level domains of public life in urban, industrial or post-



industrial societies. Indeed, the endangered language literature has noted that, since much of both indigenous language loss and maintenance is located outside highly industrialised urban societies, more culturally appropriate models of analysis are required (e.g. Dorian 1989; Rice, 2014). In other words, the field has reaffirmed a fundamental premise of sociolinguistic research - conceptual models should lend themselves as fully as possible to analysis of context.

The literature has also established the pre-eminence of the home and family and intergenerational language use as domains and purposes of language management which are crucial to language survival (Dorian, 1989; Fishman 1991); therefore, it is reasonable to expect that these lower-level domains of family life, and the social arenas of intra- and inter-familial and generational contact – should feature more prominently in theoretical frameworks.

For this reason, this study complements Spolsky's model with an alternative view of domains which emphasises these and additionally, is more pertinent to the type of rural community being researched. Although primarily designed for assessing language vitality, the IEV toolkit or 'Indicators of Ethnolinguistic Vitality' (Landweer, 2012) can serve a range of analytical objectives, including this deconstruction of language ideologies and policies in an endangered language context.

When deconstructing language management domains, the IEV exemplifies patterns of interaction and purposes of speech which index features of everyday life more common to highly rural and agricultural-subsistence contexts, such as where the IEV model was developed.<sup>6</sup> The model stresses the importance of the relational character of interaction and identities of inter-actors, and the communicative purposes of speech, placing even greater emphasis on the functions and intentions which arise in such domains. In this way, domains are further deconstructed, and a plethora of sub-domains identified.

For example, within the home domain, sub-domains are formed by occasions and interactions wherein children have fun with other children they are related to, receive nurture from older kin, or are scolded by adults. As such, these sub-domains are not

---

<sup>6</sup> The context where the model was developed in Papua New Guinea is one of intense rurality, subsistence, multilingualism and co-existing small language communities.

fixed concepts with demarcated contents; rather, an indication is given of key linguistic functions and relationships which typically arise, and these can be theoretically reconfigured for analysis of specific cultural contexts. In terms of prospects for language maintenance, a simple principle is posited: ‘the more domains where the vernacular is the sole media for expression, the better’ (Landweer, 2012:165).

Although sole use of the vernacular indeed indicates its vitality, the IEV model should not be interpreted as suggesting multilingualism is by virtue incompatible with language maintenance and necessarily indicative of endangerment; rather it offers an argument for fuller analyses of language practices in multilingual communities (by communicative domains, purposes and interlocutor relationships) so as to detect actual, rather than assumed patterns of language-use and code-choice, and better understand their determinants. In this respect, this doctoral study contributes by gathering data on (perceptions of) language ideologies and policies in public service provision (specifically health, education, and policing) and the responses of biculturals to this language paradigm.

The IEV model does not intend to identify all domains or sub-domains of language management and rank them in terms of their relevance to language maintenance; rather it firmly establishes the primacy of the family domain as the anchor to all others. Furthermore, it stresses the interconnectedness in more rural societies, between cultural and social domains and the anchor domain of family. In this way, an unassailable triumvirate of ‘foundational social domains’ emerges (home/cultural activities/social activities), standing above all other arenas of linguistic life, and conceptually interlocked into a tri-partite arrangement, in which inter-generational social bonds and networks are forged, and inter-familial interaction unfolds sustaining the economic life of households, and cultural and linguistic life of the community.

This focus on the mechanisms which support the socio-economic and cultural reproduction of the household-in-community is translated in the inter-dependence which characterises many subsistence communities. Such cultural appropriateness in theoretical modelling encourages analytical rigour and a less Western-centric and urban-centric approach. The model also recalls earlier theory of social networks

(Milroy, 1987; 2002) by affirming their relationship to language variation and maintenance. Specifically, the IEV argues that, in terms of predicting language vitality, ‘the “tighter” the social structure, the better’ (Landweer, 2012:167).

One particularly illuminating concept proposed by the IEV is to detect the language maintenance functions of ‘wantok’ (Landweer 2012) or cultural constructs of duties and enduring obligations towards interconnected individuals and collectives.

Examples include the performance of favours, or godparent duties, or ritual service towards the community, or giving of gifts; the common feature is that they enmesh individuals into linguistic interaction for socio-economic and cultural purposes.

These expectations and rights function to effectively and affectively bind speakers together in social networks which can be described using Milroy’s terms (1987:137) as ‘dense, multiplex networks [which] act as norm enforcement mechanisms’. In the linguistic culture of this study, such constructs are not only present, but highly institutionalised (see Chapters 2 and 3); some argue (Patiño, 2008) that they also have a redistributive function, in terms of levelling access to status or resources.

The IEV model posits that speakers choose which language to use each time they interact within a given domain or subdomain (a summary representation of the IEV is expressed in Figure 1.2 below). In terms of processes of language management, such characterisation includes fully cognisant interventions by wilful language managers and policy-makers; importantly, however, it does not exclude the less conscious language performances. Rather, the IEV argues that the normative practice, or trends determining which language(s) is used in each domain, is simply the product of these cumulative choices (Landweer, 2012:165). Therefore, regardless of the extent of conscious intent, such choices perform a *de facto* language management function by reinforcing past practice, and by modifying the present and future language behaviours of inter-connected speakers. Interlocutors are thus both subject and object of language management - a dynamic and interactive performance conducted both in spontaneous and unconscious fashion, and by conscious, purposeful choices and acts.

**Figure 1.2 synthesises domains and sub-domains of language management and maintenance in Landweer's (2012) Indicators of Ethnolinguistic Vitality<sup>7</sup>**

KEY SPEECH DOMAINS	POSSIBLE SUB-DOMAINS - according to purpose of speech and identity and relationship of interlocutors		RANK		
Home	e.g. instruction, correction or scolding, information, comfort, humour, and religious observance within communication dyads of spouses, adults with in-laws, adults with other adults who are not related, adults with children; children with children		1 Anchor domain		
Cultural Events*	e.g. marriages, funerals, births, naming ceremonies, harvest, competitive feasts, public discussions or arguments, group singing		2		
Social Events*	e.g. political campaigns, work parties, sport, adjudication		3		
* distribution of sub-domains across these 2 categories variable by interpretation					
OTHER DOMAINS & POSSIBLE SUB-DOMAINS					
Church	Formal Education	Business	Travel	Written Comms	Not ranked
- scripture, liturgy, sermon or homily, music, prayer, announcement	-language of instruction -language(s) of study -language(s) allowed in recreation -language(s) to discuss school matters with parents	-employment or private business (e.g. running a store) -marketing.	- using transport owned by relatives or speakers of one's own language - using transport owned by outsiders - using public transport.	- use of an accepted alphabet associated with the vernacular - use of the language(s) of instruction within the formal education system.	

<sup>7</sup> The arrangement is a summary of a proposal for conceptualising speech domains and sub-domains relevant to a non-urbanised, non-Western context, adapting data from Landweer 2012.

Notwithstanding the earlier discussion of sole use of the vernacular and vitality, a multilingual environment introduces additional variables (and hence skill) into speakers' repertoires and language management; for example, in a domain where code-switching is possible, speakers can be observed producing both 'marked' or 'unmarked' code-choices (Myers-Scotton, 1993), that is, language-use which appears more congruent or less congruent with contextualised expectations of language behaviours for a given domain, interlocutor, topic, or communicative purpose. These considerations find echo in the beliefs and practices which young bilingual speakers of MIL express and experience in their environment and report to this study.

In summary, the paradigm offered by the IEV is not prescriptive but is inclusive of identities, purposes and practices implicated in the contextual management of language, a characteristic which makes it of additional interest to a discussion of contexts where linguistic cultures are minoritised, such that speakers' agency can also be vulnerable to a lack of recognition, both at the point when language management is performed, and when it is described.

### **Valorisation and the endangerment of linguistic cultures**

In terms of predicting language loss or maintenance, the IEV also responds to the need for greater nuance and detail which has emerged in the decades since Fishman's GIDS or Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (1991) became the landmark tool for the field.<sup>8</sup> GIDS offers a scale against which to assess the vulnerability of threatened languages, meta-language to facilitate inter-disciplinary discussion of the causes and consequences of language loss (Dorian, 1989) and a planning tool for strategies of reversing language shift or RLS.<sup>9</sup> Both GIDS and IEV affirm that only the continued presence of intergenerational language transmission offers any

---

<sup>8</sup> Especially for communities situated at GIDS scale 6, noted in Fishman's review of GIDS ten years after its publication; see for example Azurmendi, Bachoc & Zabaleta, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> GIDS prioritises RLS strategies and posits universal principles alongside an 8-point scale of language vitality or health, where 8 is imminent extinction and 6 is a minimum for any prospect of language maintenance, i.e. the language does not need to be reconstructed, and crucially, is still being used by a population of child-bearing age. Inter-generational transmission is the fundamental determinant of language survival, reinforced via extended intergenerational familial groups and social networks, with whom the child interacts in everyday life, and within which they are affectively nurtured and socialised. Landweer's (2012) IEV uses eight indicators of language vitality in any of the domains it suggests (see figure 1.1.1), on a scale of 0-3, where 0 is the worst-case scenario and 3 is the best. Therefore, a language could potentially score 0-24 points, compared to 0-8-point in GIDS. Appendix \* shows a summary of the IEV model and GIDS.

reasonable basis for language maintenance, which must be secured through the nexus of family-neighbourhood-community interaction.

In terms of this doctoral study, an interesting and pertinent aspect of GIDS is the clear message it communicates that a pre-requisite for language vitality or health is grassroots language awareness, coupled with an understanding of the value of language ‘X’, the threat to it (usually from ‘Ymen’, or speakers of the dominant code, often a colonial language), the need for X-monitoring and the imperative for remedial RLS action to be taken by ‘Xmen’ themselves.

The argument posited with GIDS can be recast as a call for Xish consciousness-raising and summarised as follows: a) the health of Xish (the threatened language) rests in the hands of Xmen (Fishman’s term); therefore b) Xmen must become Xish-conscious, Xish pro-active, and Xish-monitoring; and yet remain mindful that c) there are no simplistic formulas for RLS. Poorly planned language management interventions will do more harm than good; worse still, or even fatal to language vitality, is to allow remedies to be applied to Xmen and Xish by Ymen. In order to at least decelerate language shift and retain a level of capacity, weak Xish communities are advised to seek diglossia and (non-confrontational) boundary reinforcement around Xish.<sup>10</sup> RLS activists and policy-makers are advised to proceed with caution and adhere closely to the sequence for RLS which GIDS proposes; for example, to foster intra-and inter-familial X-use before and above X-use by official bodies.

On this point, both GIDS and IEV communicate a similar message: the temptation for high-profile (but inevitably doomed) top-down language revitalisation initiatives must be avoided. These tend to be more concerned with public visibility of legalistic or political developments in the name of the threatened language community (or the objectives of the dominant language agent), than with fostering genuine Xish consciousness, identities and positive social outlook among Xmen. Moreover, they tend to be less directly relevant to sustaining everyday intergenerational use of the threatened language within its language communities. Here, it might be added that such initiatives tend even less to address the socio-economic bases of the linguistic culture which, as the IEV demonstrates, and this doctoral study argues, create and

---

<sup>10</sup> Two distinct forms of the same language, or two distinct languages, are each designated to perform either ‘H’ or high-level communicative functions in more formal contexts, and ‘L’ or low functions in more informal contexts (Ferguson, 1959).

sustain patterns of everyday linguistic life and configure the domains and purposes of its language use.

Instead, GIDS argues that in contexts where Xish is especially vulnerable to a competitor, one strategy is to make conceptual boundaries around the language and culture more secure. This recalls the message of social network theory: clear demarcations of physical or intellectual territory can sustain different communicative norms inside these spaces compared to outside (Milroy 1987:107), allowing diglossic practices to emerge, or the simultaneous use of dual code. GIDS theory supports bilingual diglossia as a defensive measure, to reduce language confrontation and competition. This is not negated by Landweer's (2012) assertion of a correlation between language vitality and the number of domains where the threatened language is the sole code choice. The IEV highlights this phenomenon as a key indicator of language maintenance (thereby implicitly proposing it as an objective); however, Fishman's (1991) theory of strongly boundaried diglossia can be understood as an accommodation or pragmatic response by activists and academics negotiating feasible trajectories for language maintenance in the midst of wider social change.

At the same time, the endangered language literature signals that bilingual diglossia does not emerge from a socio-political vacuum, and that asymmetrical relationships of power between linguistic cultures can produce conflictive situations of dual language use. In Mexico this is argued to be 'outstandingly manifested in the high rates of penetration of Spanish over the indigenous tongues [sic], in contrast to the effect of these on Spanish' (Flores Farfán & Holzscheiter, 2011:145).

On this point, the IEV model posits that the more 'remote' a language community is, the better its prospects for survival; however, it is not arguing a straight cause-effect relationship between language contact and language shift. Rather it is signalling that, more determinant than the accessibility of a given community or geographical distance between language centres, is the conceptual and cultural distance between cultures, and crucially the configuration of power relations between them.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> The IEV posits that remoteness and contact can also be analysed in terms of the percentage of the community which has a need to travel, and the means to do so; the identities of those who do travel (age/gender/status), who they travel with, and the medium used (on foot/public transport/as a lift in a private vehicle/borrowing a vehicle/belonging to kin or neighbours).

In the context where the IEV model was constructed (Papua New Guinea), a high number of very small language communities co-exist.<sup>12</sup> Given their population sizes, other models would predict these could not easily survive; however, more determinant than population size has been their capacity for self-sufficiency married with the symmetry of relationships between communities of speakers, who crucially, do not represent substantial economic threat or competition for vital resources. Although diverse cultures exist in relative proximity, they generally depend on subsistence to a similar degree, face comparable opportunities and challenges within the natural environment, and crucially, their access to the natural resources on which they depend is not mediated through hierarchical intercultural relationships. It is this configuration of a sustainable socio-economic base to facilitate reproduction of the linguistic culture, and lack of competition to undermine it, which is highly significant in producing this unique and unusual wealth of linguistic diversity, a phenomenon which Landweer (2012) terms ‘egalitarian multilingualism.’<sup>13</sup>

Crucially, self-sufficiency is significant in levelling the distribution of power and status between cultures, or in offsetting asymmetries of power which might otherwise develop. By contrast, asymmetrical relationships of socio-economic dependency can result in much larger populations of speakers becoming minoritised by a competitor culture. The dominant group not only accrues tangible assets by restricting another’s access, but accumulates power in its myriad forms, including intangible cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) such as linguistic prestige.

These themes of contested access to socio-economic resources, cultural autonomy and the leverage of one group over another are highlighted elsewhere in the literature as highly determinant of language shift, more so than self-perceptions of linguistic identity (see Mufwene, 2005). Such discussion recurs throughout this thesis and is highlighted in the introduction to the research milieu (Chapter 3) which provides a narrative of the community’s social history. The thesis argues that a community’s capacity for socio-economic and cultural reproduction is integral to the well-being of embodied speakers, which should remain the primary concern of research and policy

---

<sup>12</sup> in a population of under 8 million more than 850 languages are spoken, approximately 12% of all the world’s languages (Abley, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Other sites of intense language diversity and maintenance include Indonesia, and parts of India, such as Arunachal Pradesh, according to Harrison (2007).



in the area of language endangerment, rather than merely the loss of speech forms and cultural practices.

If it is sobering to consider that, globally, the cultural legacy and ontologies of indigenous language groups are under accelerating threat (Motsaathebe, 2011), then to consider that such loss is indicative of threats to the welfare and well-being of embodied speakers is distressing. In this respect, Critical Language Policy or CLP theory is moving endangered language research forward by first, reiterating that in multicultural societies, language policy ‘ultimately reflect[s] power relations among different groups and socio-political and economic interests’ (Ricento, 2006a:5), so that any evaluation of language policy must necessarily move beyond linguistic concerns to consider ‘whose interests and whose values are being served when language plans and policies are proposed, implemented, or evaluated.’ (Ricento, 2006a:6). In this doctoral study, this means that the paradigmatic relationship of historic colonialism and contemporary economic and cultural globalisation to the valorisation of MIL cultures becomes relevant in its deconstruction of language ideologies and policies (see Chapter 2.1).

Second, by focussing on consequences of language policy which reinforce social inequalities (Tollefson, 2006), future language planning can be critiqued and adapted, themes which are especially highlighted in this doctoral study’s review of language management in education, healthcare and policing. CLP theory has analysed the function of language policy discourses in assigning language status and in configuring relationships of power (for example, how issues such as race and gender are instrumentalised), and by affirming the inescapably ethical dimension to the formulation of language policy (Ricento, 2006). By embedding broader questions of social justice, rights, and welfare into analyses of language policy, these themes are further legitimated as parameters which inform the construction of language management theory and practice.

Threats to well-being exist in myriad forms and degrees; for example, as microaggressions on the person, as economic coercion or control, or as social injustice or structural violence. Structural violence has been defined as ‘unequal power and [ . . . ] unequal life chances: for example, deprivation, poverty, colonialism,

imperialism' (Thapar-Bjorkert, 2009). This problematisation of speakers' access to the resources necessary for the social reproduction of their linguistic culture relative to others is significant: it validates and necessitates their place in endangered language research as much as it connects with concern for the intangible, intellectual, linguistic and cultural patrimony of the polity.

Other perspectives characterise harms and threats according to the domains where they are exercised or the social constructs that they reference. For example, cultural violence can refer to the social processes in which groups that are economically and politically marginalised have aspects of their common culture 'negated, denigrated, and delegitimised' (Thapar-Bjorkert, 2009:159). These pluralities of violence are discursively constructed and communicated through sociolinguistic order, or the formation of linguistic hierarchies which distribute power between individuals and institutions, or local, national and international language agents.

Similarly, pluralities of violence can be conceptually located in terms of their presence along a continuum of chronic or acute harm or risk, from the compromise of one's cultural or linguistic autonomy at one end of the spectrum, through risks and threats to personal security or well-being, to the experience of physical harm and most extreme outcome of loss of life. At the same time, the concept of symbolic violence in Bourdieu's terms (1991) views domination as hegemonic, meaning that pervasive constructs are assimilated into the status quo and embedded into everyday social habits (Castree et al, 2013); for example, even the way interlocutors speak to one another functions to sustain relations of domination (Žižek, 2009).

Therefore, recognising the inherent violence of ideologies and policies of language means gaining further insight into the generation and distribution of power. In Foucault's terms (1982), power should not be understood as a phenomenon, instrument or institution, but rather as 'a way in which certain actions modify others ... power exists only when it is put into action' (1982:788). This characterisation of power as a 'set of actions upon other actions' (Foucault, 1982:789) means it is by virtue dynamic, interactive, contextual, relational, and processual; power does not exist independently, but only in the antagonism between subjects. Therefore, as this doctoral study explores the valorisation of MIL linguistic cultures and prevailing

language ideologies and policies, so it must detect such antagonistic distribution of power between linguistic cultures, expressed as pluralities of violence.

Therefore, threats to the well-being of the embodied speaker are a central theme; however, well-being is not merely the absence of threat or harm, and so this thesis employs the notion of *buen vivir* to express its meaning. *Buen vivir* is a concept increasingly present in Latin American discourses of development, notably in relation to the loss and maintenance of cultural and linguistic patrimony and biodiversity, and threats resultant from a range of factors, including extractive industries in communities which have been strongholds of indigenous linguistic cultures (Schavelzon, 2015).

As a construct, *buen vivir* offers a philosophical perspective, suite of political objectives, and analytical tool or barometer of well-being. Its alignment of well-being with equitable and secure access to the means of cultural reproduction, archetypal of Andean indigenous cultures (such that the original Quechuan term *sumak kawsay* has entered formal political discourses) is largely shared across a diverse range of autochthonous cultures of the Americas (Schavelzon, 2015).

Definitional characteristics of *buen vivir* include: a needs-based distribution of social goods and access to resources; a more interactive relationship with the natural world and greater focus on ecological sustainability; higher degrees of social and affective interdependency within the culture; and the pursuit of non-threatening relationships beyond it (Gudynas, 2011).

In generic terms, *buen vivir* is instrumentalised to demarcate indigenous from European colonial identities and denote an ethical and intellectual gulf between worldviews. Located in this breach is the Western academic tradition, whose constructs have nevertheless permeated economic modelling of international development policy. Western-informed indices of quality of life can be overly dependent on quantitative measures of tangible infrastructure and resources and prove inadequate for assessing *buen vivir* (del Amo Rodríguez & Moctezuma Pérez, 2008).

For example, the highly labour-intensive and inter-dependent character of subsistence agriculture typical of the community in this study, demands more

qualitative and evaluative measures capable of investigating a holistic concept of well-being that is necessarily interpersonal and environmentally and socially-rooted. Going further, *buen vivir* calls for conceptual paradigms which facilitate a decolonising of systems of knowledge and reconfiguration of local and global power relationships (de Sousa Santos, 2010), by embedding indigenous or indigenous-informed notions of socio-economic justice into development policy, and wider political and ideological processes (Gudynas, 2011).

*Buen vivir* interconnects to the IEV model in focussing attention on a culture's capacity to sustain its forms of expression and interaction which determine and define its identity. Similarly, they both are useful for reorienting valorisation beyond abstract discussion of language prestige or hierarchies of linguistic identities, towards the perceptions and experiences of individuals and communities of speakers, and the affective and productive nature of relationships with other linguistic groups.

In other words, conceptual tools should engage with consideration of the interior and exterior lives of socially contextualised, embodied speakers, who are negotiating changing economic, political and ecological trends in pursuit of meeting their affective, moral, intellectual, as well as material needs. This study dedicates substantial space to the perception of language ideologies and policies by MIL speakers (Chapter 4), and to analysis of the impact of these on well-being.

These themes interconnect with other conceptualisations of social, linguistic, and economic order, such as the notion of linguistic markets and value-laden cultural commodities, and the role of power relations between language agents (Bourdieu, 1991). In the construction of social, linguistic and economic order, language valorisation is instrumentalised through concepts such as language prestige, or the social and linguistic value afforded to a culture from 'outside' it, and which ascribes its rank in sociolinguistic hierarchies; and the concept of social outlook contained in the IEV model (which develops what might be termed Xish consciousness, referring to GIDS).

Social outlook speaks of a language community's own sense of self-worth, its awareness of identity, cultural distinctiveness, and estimation of its own value relative to others. Although both concepts closely intersect and interact, they are importantly distinct insofar as their mutability: from civil rights movements to

feminism, Freirean pedagogy to peasant mobilisations, the 20<sup>th</sup> century has witnessed a plethora of social movements which have understood how consciousness-raising around identity can be transformative, if not of the wider social order, then at least of individual lives.

A growing body of literature also ‘summons the concept of inter-language prestige [as] a motivating force for language maintenance and shift’ (Landweer, 2012:168). While there is ample debate over the extent to which language does accurately serve as a marker of identity (see Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012), it does undoubtedly represent a highly significant surface marker between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. As such, language prestige and the community’s social outlook are necessarily intertwined, but more importantly, bound up with the distribution of power and ultimately, with the well-being of embodied speakers

At the same time, caution should be exercised when handling concepts of valorisation. For instance, to illustrate language prestige, the IEV model employs the example of deference by one language community to another. However, surface-level features of interactions do not necessarily clarify the extent to which deference represents an act of internalisation by the disadvantaged speaker (in cognitive and affective terms) and is functioning to subtract value from their own sense of linguistic identity), or how far it represents a congruent, strategic behaviour performed in a context of power imbalance.

Where asymmetries of power exist between language groups, and reduced language prestige underpins inequities of access to social goods, then the well-being of embodied speakers is continually implicated in intercultural encounters; therefore, this thesis is arguing that the motivations driving language behaviours should remain sites of interrogation, rather than subject to assumption.

On the one hand, it is rational and uncontroversial to suggest that speakers are internalising the very values instrumentalised in their oppression; on the other hand, in a context of inequality where minoritised groups are often the object of discourses constructed about them, rather than by them, it is crucial to reiterate that speakers can also maintain and valorise a distinct sense of ‘self’ which allows them to exercise

pragmatic or strategically useful behaviours, without necessarily assimilating (in the same manner or extent) the values which function to privilege the ‘other’.

Moreover, a positive social outlook can aid a community in tangibly resisting threats to its identity and vitality posed by otherwise low language prestige: indeed, such resilience can even become strengthened by ideological contention, especially when distinct cultural beliefs and practices can be clearly juxtaposed to those of national culture.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, the assumption of a straight correlation between negative language prestige expressed towards Xmen, and negative social outlook among Xmen, must be avoided; similarly, care should be taken when interpreting the contextual language acts of a threatened language community to avoid inaccurate conclusions being drawn by outsiders, which are then re-used to characterise speakers’ cognitive, affective and behavioural responses to hierarchies of prestige.

In the light of this point about inaccurate conclusions, it is important to address the fact that in the literature on Mexican indigenous language loss there have been claims that a sense of shame exists among MIL speakers at being heard speaking MIL in public, based on informants’ reporting of *vergüenza* or embarrassment; this reluctance is then understood as motivating language shift and leading to language endangerment (for example, Hill & Hill, 1977; 1986) These enlightening studies have been invaluable to the research community; nevertheless, it is still important that any conclusion they draw regarding the apparent consequences of negative language prestige (apparent shame among the disadvantaged linguistic culture) should be fully contextualised and highly nuanced before it is cited; similarly, it should be interrogated before being regarded as also indicative of the social outlook of the language community in question.

For example, other studies which examine the shift to Spanish among speakers of MIL, namely Totonac (Lam, 2009) and Náhuatl (Messing, 2007), and which scrutinise the language attitudes of MIL speakers, find that they are dealing with competing pressures, and concurrently processing multiple contradictory ideologies:

---

<sup>14</sup> For example, the Seri or ComCaac of California have been successful in maintaining their indigenous linguistic cultures, despite using Spanish for education and public services, and despite their small population size (Marlett, 2006); importantly, the community articulates an antipathy and even hostility towards national culture (Marlett, 2007c).

that is, speakers can simultaneously and internally process a belittling of MIL, whilst also processing an RLS or indigenist defence of MIL. In this doctoral study among bicultural informants, it will also be seen how speakers can and must negotiate the different external socio-economic realities associated with each language community (and their interface), and pragmatically approach the skewed distribution of power privileging one language community over another.

In the same vein, if a more holistic or ecological approach is taken, to use Haugen's (1971) terms, to the interaction of language (or rather, of speakers) with environment, then any description or ascription of 'language shame' should become a vocal site of contention, rather than consensus. This contentiousness has been articulated by those who argue against assuming that language shift stems primarily from poor social outlook (to borrow Landweer's term); rather it simply represents the cumulative effect of decisions by individual speakers who are pursuing their personal well-being given the socio-economic realities they face (Mufwene, 2005). As such, the stakes of language-use and code-choice in discrete domains should be interrogated in the same terms (as this doctoral research seeks to do, in respect of education, health and policing); similarly, it argues, there should be scrutiny of the assumptions which can lead MIL- speakers to being inaccurately characterised as 'ashamed' of MIL-use, rather than 'shamed into' or simply 'manoeuvred into' the use of Spanish.

Language prestige conferred towards the language community, and social outlook generated from within, return discussion to its initial point of departure: the function of ideologies and policies in communicating language valorisation. Both speakers and non-speakers perceive the extent to which a given linguistic culture is valorised not only by identifiable persons, but by the machinery of the state and market (who additionally are personified by individuals). Inferences can be drawn from public discourses in a full range of spheres, including the arts, academic, and especially religious communities (Martí, et al., 2005:189-199) regarding the apparent use and value of ethnolinguistic diversity to the national context. In turn, these signals impact upon a specific culture's social outlook (with the caveats discussed earlier) and notions of language-in-identity or identity-in-language.

Both GIDS theory and the IEV have highlighted how the future of Xish lies in the hands of Xmen; hence the need for consciousness-raising, or to use Freirean terms, *conscientização* (1970), or an awareness of one's identity and circumstances that is socially engaged, critical and purposeful; more importantly, that fosters auto-valorisation precisely through separation of 'self' from the minoritising discourses of dominant 'others', and a collective perspective on the lived experience and distribution of contextual power across social groups. Indeed, it is particularly interesting that in the informant community to this doctoral study, *conscientização* has been referenced and instrumentalised (see Chapter 5). Hence, consciousness-raising around Xish and valorisation of Xish identities are central themes: as will be seen in discussion of the research milieu (Chapter 3), these values are expressed in the community's mobilisation to protect the sustainability of livelihoods, rectify injustices and secure appropriate public services, notably in education.



## **Chapter 1.2 Deconstructing societal multilingualism**

### **Multilingualism and valorisation**

The latter discussion of consciousness-raising, social outlook, language prestige, language valorisation and the relationship of these constructs to language-use and maintenance, all reiterate the affective and cognitive character of language socialisation. This character is further clarified by theories of bilinguality and bilingual language behaviour, which situate the speaker into their social context and consider the impact on language acquisition of ideologies which valorise languages differently.

Indeed, the term valorisation was originally proposed in relation to the linguistic and cognitive development of bilingual individuals, and consequences for societal bilinguality or multilingualism (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). For example, a language which is perceived to be less well valued, even unconsciously, becomes harder to acquire or maintain in the face of a more prestigious competitor, since negative valorisation, it is argued, produces affective and cognitive obstacles to language processing.

At the same time, the socio-cultural interdependence hypothesis (Hamers & Blanc, 1989; 2000) highlights both an association between bilinguality and cognitive and linguistic advantage (or additive bilinguality), or cognitive and linguistic deficit (subtractive bilinguality), the key variable being the inter-relationship with socio-cultural context. Both individuals and societies can achieve ‘additive bilinguality’ when the acquisition of second or more languages does not diminish the speaker’s capacity in their home language or languages. Rather, the bilingual gains a level of language consciousness and cross-cultural awareness that monolinguals will lack (important when considering Xish consciousness), and furthermore, which generates additional social and affective capacity and skill. The notion of additive bilinguality has been highly influential in informing approaches to multilingual education, ideologies of multiculturalism and multilingualism, language pedagogy, and policies of language management (García, 2009).

The nexus between language valorisation and additive bilinguality lies in the extent to which affective responses impact not only on motivations, but on the actual cognitive processes which hinder or help language acquisition or maintenance

(Hamers & Blanc, 2000). This claim echoes earlier research (Krashen, 1982), which has demonstrated that learners can raise or lower an affective barrier to language. Importantly, affective responses are not only the product of interpersonal interactions, or personal circumstances, but are triggered by wider psycho-social anxieties, such as the security of one's social identity, perceived threats and risks posed by one's language use, ideologies of language prestige, and the political context (Spolsky, 2000). Furthermore, perceptions of a language's instrumental value within a globalised, technologically advancing world, can also provoke affective, motivational and linguistic responses (Dornyei, 2006).

Therefore, everyday experiences, choices, decisions and encounters are all implicated in the valorisation of language, expressed in code-switching behaviours and the use or disuse of language. To fully comprehend the function of an affective filter in language use and acquisition, the argument is that these experiences must be examined 'in relationship to social structures of power,' since bilingualism does not thrive in situations of unequal language power (Garcia, 2009:106). Speakers can abandon their home language if they perceive it as a minority relative to others, meaning that minoritisation should be understood as a function of language valorisation (Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008).

Moreover, if it is important to understand how language valorisation and minoritisation intersect with societal multilingualism, it is also important that the real nature of multilingual practices is understood. It is common for speakers of endangered languages to be multilingual, so that code-switching - or swapping between codes or interspersing one language variety with another - is highly characteristic of such communities, to the point that it has been assimilated as an unmarked feature of language practices (Rice 2014).

Indeed, language practices have been emphasised by notions of languaging and translanguaging, which focus on the performative, interactive, and contextually-responsive character of language-use and acquisition (see Garcia, 2009a and García & Li, 2013). Translanguaging encompasses the deployment of multiple codes or

language varieties as practices congruent with the speaker's wider linguistic environment and individual context.<sup>15</sup>

Bicultural speakers can thus exploit (and develop) an expanded linguistic and cultural repertoire by continually evaluating their needs (e.g. domain of speech, communicative purposes, interlocutors), and adjusting their linguistic practices, a view that affirms the intellectual increment of bilinguality, and acknowledges the capacity of young biculturals for cognitively and affectively processing multiple layers of linguistic and cultural difference.

If identities are formed, performed and negotiated through translanguaging and transcultural practice, then abstract concepts of language knowledge will need to be reconsidered by policy-makers, in favour of a view of actual contextualised linguistic practices and habits. For instance, the heteroglossic character of many MIL households and its patterns of everyday familial interaction is better conceptualised in terms of 'home language practices' (García, 2009:57): the child acquires skill in translanguaging habits, which they go on to employ in wider society.

As such, the concept of neatly demarcated, first and second languages, acquired sequentially inside and outside the home respectively needs reconsideration; likewise, the idea of knowing a language or speaking it fluently – these are constructed philosophical and political notions, rather than linguistically determined measures (Ricento, 2014). Concepts which are too rigid can be an obstacle to the detection of patterns of language use in the environment, and an appreciation of how languages are formed, acquired and deployed in context, rather than 'exist' as systems of intellectual knowledge (Ricento, 2014).

In terms of this study's young informants, it is important to note that an acknowledgement of translanguaging practices does not ignore the need that young speakers of MIL may have for specific language input in education (this issue is discussed in Chapter 5); rather, it acknowledges that speakers of indigenous languages whose identities and linguistic cultures have been structurally minoritised

---

<sup>15</sup> Nuanced differences of perspectives exist on languaging and translanguaging, as García & Li (2013:5-18) discuss, but these coalesce around the emphasis on interactive, contextualised practices

require language-in-education practice which anticipates and addresses their actual, contextual needs as biculturals (May & Aikman, 2003).

To retain their linguistic identities, bicultural speakers of MIL and indigenous languages elsewhere in the Americas must overcome obstacles supported by asymmetric sociolinguistic order and a historic minoritisation of their home language culture; on the other hand, they must be able to exploit opportunities presented by engagement with national culture and moreover, to extract benefit from the nation-state's more recent instrumentalisation of indigeneity as it reconfigures the national identity as multicultural and multilingual.

In other words, notions of multilingualism, and the range of dependent or constitutive concepts, such as additive or subtractive bilinguality, or *lingua franca*, are constructed within the real-life contexts of speakers. Deconstruction of such issues necessitates analysis of the linguistic and social pressures upon speakers, who carve conceptual pathways across difficult terrain as they make tangible life-choices and employ patterns of language use.

Notions of bilinguality and multilingualism are naïve if they are de-coupled from the socio-political context of the speaker; therefore, the closer the scrutiny of sociolinguistic order, and the greater the attention to unpicking intersectionalities of language use, distribution of power and access to life-enhancing resources, the more insightful the conclusions which can be drawn about bilinguality.

This conceptual and methodological message is communicated in literature on multicultural societies where several autochthonous, imported or imposed languages exist in close proximity, meaning a *lingua franca* is necessary between speakers. However, where the *lingua franca* is also the dominant language of the state and its national identity, this highly pertinent fact must be recognised, and its implications explored before drawing conclusions about bilinguality and multilingual practices (Freeland, 2003).

Becoming a confident and competent user of the structurally dominant code implies more benefits than simply acquiring the alleged cognitive and linguistic benefits associated with notions of additive bilinguality, and greater costs than the alleged

reductive linguistic function of subtractive bilinguality. For example, in acquiring the lingua franca, a younger speaker may be more able to get a job/education/promotion; however, they may well be hastening the death of their native language; moreover, they may even feel their most intimate personal identity is worth less than others. In this way, the speaker's profoundly personal motives and affective responses are implicated when perceptible, underlying power dynamics and consequences are bound up with language-use. Therefore, becoming a speaker of a dominant language is necessarily a subjective and integrationist project, rather than an objective instrumentalisation of code as lingua franca, laden with implications for speakers' identities, and for access to power within the national sociolinguistic order (Freeland, 2003).

Even where there is enthusiasm for pluralist or intercultural models of education from national governments, there is consequently a need for caution. First, models of language-in-education are notoriously centralised and politicised (Mar-Molinero, 2000), and illustrate the category of high-profile policy interventions imposed by Ymen on Xish cultures, which Fishman (1991) perceived as potentially damning to language vitality.

Second, the professed intention may be to sustain multilingualism and multiculturalism, but when it fails to observe and comprehend the social context of the learner, the attitudes and behaviours of Xish speakers and bicultural pupils, including home language practices, social network interaction and translanguaging, it can further mislead or distort, rather than inform, language learning.

For example, rather than addressing pupils' actual language learning needs, education models can depend on abstract notions of bilinguality or multilingualism (Mar-Molinero, 2000). In this respect, 'interculturality' in education can unwittingly reference and reproduce outdated notions of culture and identity, that is, as monolithic, static, and timeless phenomena, transmitted intact from one generation to the next (Avruch, 1998; Cameron, 2008), rather than communicating how both language and culture are continually re-formed by interactive practices.<sup>16</sup> Such illusion and abstraction can also encourage the description of decontextualised formal systems of language, and displace the focus of educationalists from strategies

---

<sup>16</sup> Avruch (pp14–16) is cited by Spencer-Oatey, 2012.

of revitalisation towards the codification, graphisation and standardisation of indigenous languages (Freeland, 2003).

Likewise, notions of multilingualism and even cultural and linguistic rights do not per se facilitate acceptance of diversity, or more importantly, address the patterns and source of inequalities between linguistic cultures: in fact, some argue these notions are ‘dangerous’ insofar as they obscure injustices behind a misleadingly positive gloss (Blommaert et al, 2012). Discourses of ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘interculturality’ consolidate ideological continuity and political accommodation (Makoni & Pennycook, 2006), by commoditising other cultures whilst enhancing the legitimacy of the dominant linguistic culture (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2013); neither is the dominant culture challenged by such processes into confronting the more determinant structural causes of language inequalities (Mufwene, 2005).

This means that unless notions of culturality and language are fundamentally reimagined, apparently pluralistic discourses can also further embed the ‘ethnolinguistic assumption’ (which assumes a correlation between one language, one culture, and one nation) and can reinforce the ‘otherness’ of ‘others’ by unnecessarily imbuing cultures with attributes, such that variables of regionality become overblown into identities (Blommaert et al, 2012:5). These risks are also detectable in discourses of language revitalisation and linguistic rights and the narratives which communities construct as they seek redress for historic injustices (Patrick, 2008).

Moreover, a society is not accurately characterised as multilingual merely by the presence of multiple languages (Makoni & Pennycook, 2006): rather it is the actual instrumentalisation of language, informed by ideologies of use and value which determines this. In this respect, multilingual policy in many post-independence contexts is better described as ‘oligolingualism’ (Blommaert et al, 2012:6) wherein the oligarchy has ranked languages and ascribed them domains. For example, multilingualism is permissible in primary schools, but the number of languages used reduces as the level of education rises; thus, HE becomes the domain of the national, first-ranked language.

This means that bilingual practices at the Colegio Paulo Freire High School in Huehuetla/Kgoyom (discussed in Chapter 3) can be viewed as transgressive and

pioneering, given that the use of MIL in HE is a phenomenon that has only recently started to emerge in Mexico. The case of this independent Totonac school is employed to illustrate that, notwithstanding prevailing ideological paradigms, there is still scope for educational pedagogies to be developed by and with minoritised linguistic cultures, which can address the social context of the learner, raise Xish consciousness, and pursue goals of both language maintenance and academic achievement. In this way, even if policy on language-in-education is not solely determinant or descriptive of sociolinguistic order, it can still be transformative of educational and linguistic outcomes, and impact even upon wider aspects of social context.

Conversely, speakers of a minoritised language can lose motivation to maintain it unless it is reinforced as the language of choice within the family or a social group that is significant to their affective well-being. Similarly, new speakers may struggle to find motivation to learn it, since the intellectual effort is insufficiently rewarded in either social or affective terms. Moreover, ‘motivations alone are insufficient [...] if a close-knit community network structure loosens [...] the social prerequisites for supporting highly localised norms disappear, and dialect levelling takes place’ (Milroy 2002: 566). Therefore, a minimum configuration of (socio-economic) support or skeleton is required, upon which to flesh out a linguistic culture, and space and prospects for growth.

Therefore, valorisation is a thread running through issues of language loss, maintenance and language planning, individual bilinguality and societal multilingualism, the minoritisation of linguistic cultures, and the function and expression of the distribution of power through sociolinguistic order. The contextualised character of bilingual language behaviours and beliefs are situation-specific and responsive. Affective and linguistic content are expressed, assimilated or negotiated through interactions with significant others and social networks, but also impersonal social structures. The significance of social networks to patterns of language-use and maintenance, identity, and social outlook, stresses valorisation processes and the interdependence of individual and societal factors: just as a child is socialised into values and behaviours which they subsequently reproduce, each with modification, but largely in conformity with or contradiction to the values of a wider

dominant culture, so too language beliefs and practices are transferred and transformed in such dynamic inter-actions.

Meanwhile, in situations of competition and asymmetric relations between linguistic cultures, social networks and social outlook gain even greater importance.

Sociolinguistic hierarchies mean a dominant language can represent both a threat and an allure to young speakers of minoritised languages, who rationally aspire to the opportunities it affords, even whilst positively valorising a home linguistic culture.

Young biculturals in this study, it will be seen, respond strategically to context, suggestive of an expansion of culturality or ideation and skills. This capacity or ‘additive biculturality’ as it might be termed, signals young people’s ability to process multi-layered and multi-faceted identities (rather than only hybrid) and to engage with transcultural, as well as translanguaging processes.

Taken together, the research on language valorisation, the affective component of language acquisition, and the role of social networks in shaping speech practices, combine to demonstrate that the young bilingual speaker should be perceived as a speaker whose choices depend on more variables than the identity of the interlocutor with whom they are visibly interacting. Rather, both an internal and external world, local and wider context is referenced by the speaker. Perceptions of past and present interactions shape attitudes and behaviours, in which the linguistic element is one component.

This study can therefore take as a point of departure the premise that more than just linguistic data is required to analyse the valorisation of KT Totonac and MIL in local and national contexts.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the notion of valorisation will be employed in its widest sense, analysing a range of ideologies and policies which implicate attitudes towards not just MIL-use, but identity markers associated with MIL generally and Totonac specifically, such as ethnicity and skin colour, rurality, dress, adhesion to ‘Western’ or ‘traditional’ cultural norms and forms of social organisation, individual or collective forms of ownership and production, access to land and cash, wealth, and poverty. Of pertinence to this study is analysis of the intersectionalities of these

---

<sup>17</sup> For this thesis only, I use ‘KT Totonac’ to refer to the Totonac language and dialects spoken in the Kgoym, which is the intra-Totonac name for the rural town and municipality officially known as Huehuetla (from the Náhuatl - see discussion in Chapter 2.2).



markers of identities with social and linguistic minoritisation, which generates pressures on young bilinguals, including negotiation of multiple identities and selective acculturation.

In other words, valorisation of linguistic culture is approached in a holistic fashion to consider how narratives of MIL are constructed in discourses of identity. The identity and persona of the speaker, and the cultural world they are perceived to represent or contradict, form an integral part of the valorisation of the language they speak. In acknowledging this, discussion returns to focus on the embodied speaker, their experience of social context, well-being, and the ideologies and policies which can culminate in their minoritisation.

### **Valorisation and minoritisation**

Minoritisation is especially useful as a conceptual tool in that it stresses actions rather than objects: the performative acts of language management (not limited to linguistic issues) which reproduce the minority status of a linguistic identity, in accordance with a skewed distribution of power, can majoritise one language community and minoritise another, regardless of actual speaker numbers in each (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2006). Therefore, using minoritisation as reference encourages analyses of the function of language ideologies and policies upon linguistic cultures relative to one another, such as the ascription of social status and value; crucially, it affirms arguments for scrutiny of their action upon the existing structural pressures and inequalities (Garcia, 2006). In this way it offers a lens or filter through which to view constituent elements of language management, steering the gaze away from linguistic forms and codes, and onto assumptions and practices which ascribe social status and configure asymmetrical social relationships. Furthermore, it affirms those views of policy change targeting societal multilingualism (typically, education curriculum management) as ineffective or even counter-productive, unless accompanied by the type of structural change which secures the welfare and sustainability of a linguistic culture (McCarty, 2005; Romaine 2008).

Minoritisation fosters multiple lines of inquiry, and makes available for analysis any aspect of policy or ideology with implications for the well-being of linguistic cultures. Whether policies explicitly perform a language management function, or whether this is implicit, each act of language management plays a determinant role in

communicating continuity and change in sociolinguistic ideologies and policies, and in situating linguistic cultures relative to one another in sociolinguistic order. For example, this thesis argues that the under-representation of contemporary Totonac linguistic cultures in academic literature and Mexican public discourse implicitly indicate their ideological and political minoritisation.<sup>18</sup> As a conceptual paradigm, minoritisation also guides research towards the character of societal bilinguality; it interrogates rather than accepts notions of multiculturalism and interculturality (Garcia, 2009:225) of ideologies underpinning language education (e.g. monoglossic, diglossic or heteroglossic), and indeed the academic achievement of students from minoritised linguistic cultures should be subject to scrutiny (McCarty, 1998; 2002).

Finally, minoritisation offers an important perspective on the function of linguistic human rights, a premise of which is that minority language communities must be able to participate in a democracy and enjoy a secure linguistic environment in their home language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008, 2012). Notions of participation and democracy raise questions of cultural, linguistic and economic autonomy, territorial and personal rights, and relationships of power between language agents (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2006; 2008). Linguistic rights are therefore informed by deconstruction of linguistic imperialism (Garcia, 2009:88 developing on Phillipson, 1992), and the legacies of a colonial past; in this regard, the concept of linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988:13) is shorthand to highlight how vested interests are implicated in the structural minoritisation of a linguistic culture.

Consequently, initiatives in RLS and linguistic rights cannot be limited to merely linguistic questions or the recruitment of new speakers but must address the wider social processes which erode or enhance language-use and prestige. Neither should RLS be interpreted as a return to an idealised past; rather, it is argued it can embody language shift of a positive, invigorating and emancipatory character (Huss, 2011:9). This thesis argues that the colonial legacy of linguicism against MIL is witnessed in the construction of contemporary social identities and notions of indigeneity, which are configured to secure the dominance of Mexican national culture, and concomitant minoritisation of MIL cultures, even whilst distributing language rights. This

---

<sup>18</sup> In fact, 85% of human languages are undocumented, according to Harrison (2007).

explains, for example, why there are different personal implications for identification with MIL groups between new speakers and home speakers.

Language endangerment and revitalisation are social processes formulated and experienced in contact between individual human subjects, that is, not with anonymous or undifferentiated objects (Cameron 2008: 276); with this in mind, minoritisation facilitates a focus on the other central theme of this doctoral study: the well-being or *buen vivir* of speakers of MIL, in linguistic, social and structural terms. A perspective of minoritisation is cognisant of the conceptual interconnectedness of language ideologies and policies with language valorisation, and necessarily extends discussion towards tangible, personalised repercussions for the well-being of embodied speakers. Moreover, minoritisation contextualises the contemporary sociolinguistic order against a historical structural oppression of indigenous linguistic cultures in Mexico and sites of European colonialism. Such sociolinguistic order distributes privilege and is detectable in relationships of power, pluralities of violence, and the access of historically oppressed linguistic cultures to the means of cultural reproduction and conditions necessary for well-being or *buen vivir*. This implicates the exercise of cultural control, which in this context extends beyond issues of identities, language, and cultural practices, to power of decision-making in meeting the culture's socio-economic needs. As an example, this thesis will examine how a minoritised culture has sought to exercise cultural control in one such arena (high school education).

In this way, the thesis extends minoritisation to questions of access to public services (and access to resources for sustaining the community, especially important in non-industrialised contexts), with cultural control implicated in both the perspective of minoritisation and the paradigm of *buen vivir*. Together, these two theoretical frameworks situate the focus of this study and its task of analysing sociolinguistic ideologies and policies. More importantly, they anchor abstract concepts of language valorisation to the social and cultural well-being of embodied speakers.

### **1.3 Conclusion: ideologies and policies of language diversity**

In sum, this discussion has reflected on the role of language ideologies and policies in sustaining asymmetrical power relations between language groups and the minoritising function of language management. It has focussed on concepts and paradigms from the literature, such as language valorisation, prestige, social outlook, and Xish consciousness, which usefully serve the research objectives of this doctoral study: these are to contextualise and analyse the perception and theorisation of sociolinguistic situation offered by young bicultural MIL speakers.

The study seeks to understand how and why language management is performed consciously and less-consciously for specific communicative purposes, in discrete domains. These domains (education, health, and policing) are important social arenas where there has been contention between the minoritised linguistic culture and the dominant national culture for cultural control (discussed in Chapters 2.3 and 3). In these domains, the actions and agents of language management/cultural control communicate messages regarding the valorisation of the local linguistic culture, with implications for the well-being of its speakers. This valorisation is expressed linguistic and extra-linguistic forms, such as the distribution of socio-economic power between language agents.

Bearing in mind how cultural control and competition over socio-economic resources are central in the configuration of power relations, language management is analysed by referring to the structural minoritisation of a language group. Therefore, at this point, the thesis now turns its attention towards the local and national environment in which such language management is occurring. An introduction to the national historic context precedes discussion of local identities and Totonac linguistic cultures, emergent language policy, discourses of MIL, and the interesting and unique local sociolinguistic context of the research, so that the perceptions of young Totonac and MIL biculturals can be better appreciated and interpreted.

## **Chapter 2     Social and linguistic context**

### **2.0     Introduction to social and linguistic context**

The preceding discussions (Chapter 1) have explained how language ideologies and policies are formed in social and historic contexts, and are as susceptible and responsive to situational variables as any other cultural product. Therefore, as the thesis moves on to consideration of language beliefs and behaviours negotiated by young contemporary speakers of MIL, it is important to gain an overview of the social and linguistic context, by identifying pertinent local institutions and agents and historical, political, and economic factors which are highly determinant of milieu.

An observable tendency in contemporary and historic Mexican language policies has been to situate the maintenance of Mexican indigenous languages (MIL) within discourses of national identity (Hidalgo, 2006a). Such discourses of identity are constructed not only for domestic consumption, but also for external audiences, particularly former colonial powers, and fellow post-independence nations, especially of the Americas, and the largest and nearest territorial threat to Mexico, the United States. These discourses play a powerful role in the ideological premises of language policy, a theme discussed at length in the first section of this chapter.

To contextualise this discussion, the chapter opens with a brief overview (2.1) of key political, socio-economic, and linguistic developments from before Spanish colonial rule, through Mexican independence and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The chapter argues their significance in shaping contemporary sociolinguistic context, and direct or indirect impact on language management and the maintenance of MIL. It particularly explores connections between changing ideologies of national identity and citizenship, in post-independence and post-revolutionary Mexico, and language management. In other words, the social construction of identities is inextricably linked to language ideologies and policies.

Next, the chapter outlines the current diversity of linguistic cultures in Mexico, contemporary linguistic identities and the changing valorisation of MIL, witnessed in recent policies of MIL revitalisation (2.2). This discussion of the value of MIL will be revisited in Chapters 4 and 5, as revitalisation and re-valorisation are considered not only in terms of intangible or inherent value, but also more tangible economic

benefit, in what can be argued to be an increasing commodification of MIL cultures in discourses of MIL revitalisation.

Following this, a separate section of the chapter (2.2.1) briefly outlines the state of current knowledge regarding Totonac linguistic cultures, notable recent developments in research, (such as changing taxonomical classifications), and newly emergent sources of literature. There is also reference to the newly-founded Universidad Intercultural del Estado de Puebla (UIEP) based in the *Totonacapan* or Totonac homeland, since the research and policy implications of establishing intercultural universities targeting MIL-speaking students in MIL-dominant areas will emerge later in the thesis, especially in the analysis and discussion of findings.

Finally, the chapter concludes with detail on the specific, local context in which this study is situated (2.3). It explains language use in Puebla state and the community of Huehuetla/Kgoyom where this study has been conducted, and discusses why Huehuetla/Kgoyom is a location of particular interest for an analysis of language ideologies and policies.

In this way, the structure and aim of this chapter provide an overview of current and emergent research on Totonac linguistic cultures, and contextualise subsequent findings of the thesis by providing a meso- and micro-level perspective on the sociolinguistic environment in which MIL/Spanish bicultural informants interact with language ideologies and policies.

## **Chapter 2.1 National historic context**

### ***Desindianizar al mexicano, mexicanizar al indio: MIL and the construction of national identity***

Prior to Spanish conquest, hundreds of indigenous languages were spoken in the territories which would later form the independent Mexican republic. Náhuatl had served the institutions of Aztec rule as a lingua franca during the 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and arguably, limited parallels can be drawn between the earlier function of Náhuatl, and the later use of Castilian Spanish from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards by the successor Spanish empire. However, these must be heavily qualified by bearing in mind the socio-cultural reconfiguration resultant from Spanish colonisation.

Nevertheless, the literature suggests that during Spanish rule in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the transfer of its language (and religious and cultural norms) onto its colonial subjects was secondary to its primary objective of efficient resource extraction; strategically, this resulted in more pragmatic or arms-length approaches to language management as a function of social control (Terborg, García Landa & Moore, 2007; Parodi, 2006). Where economic benefit could be extracted from subjugated polities without substantive reconfiguration of linguistic and cultural identities, there was less imperative to do so; but wherever necessary, it was pursued, constituting a pattern of sociolinguistic management of economic exploitation seen repeated in other sites of European colonisation, such as in Africa (Mufwene, 2005).

For both empires, therefore, it can be said that language policy was most relevant to the extent in which it a) denoted the centre or summit of imperial power; b) facilitated economic exploitation of the social base; and c) could co-opt useful elites into its own project. On this latter point, it was when creole or native-born Spanish-speaking successor elites emerged, mobilised for rupture with the Spanish Crown, and competed for local power, that an enduring nexus of language, power and nationhood was more firmly established in Mexico.

The impact on language policy was dramatic, and the following quote from Terborg et al (2007) on sociolinguistic change in this period neatly summarises, the ideological and political processes associated with rupture from the colonial power in

the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the profound linguistic and cultural consequences it produced:.

within the first 50 years of independence, Spanish went from a minority language spoken by around 10% of the population to being the recognised first language of about 70% (Cienfuegos, 2004:170)<sup>19</sup> [...] it seems clear that, confronted with a fragmented and linguistically diverse population, it was preferable from the perspective of the new liberal mestizo leaders to impose a one language – one nation ideology (2007:141)

During this turbulent period, a declaration of independence was closely followed by more than half a century of political and armed struggle to construct a national government, settle a constitution, and defend the extent of national territories from foreign invasion and annexation.<sup>20</sup> The scope, depth, and pace of linguistic change accompanying such socio-political upheaval is borne out by the statistics in Figure 2.1 below. Mexico's population had been halved during three centuries of Spanish rule (1521 to 1821), due to the massacres of conquest, European diseases, and the poverty and ill-health resultant from displacement from agricultural resources. However, at the outbreak of the War of Independence (1810), MIL-speakers still represented between three fifths and three quarters of the total Mexican population. Several sources claim they stood at over 60% (Hidalgo, 2006b; Mar-Molinero, 2000), with many citing Aguirre Beltrán's (1946) figure of 64% (Bartolomé, 2006; Cifuentes, 1992). The most dramatic fall in the MIL-speaking population occurred within the first century post-independence (1810-1910), falling from 64% to 13% (Cifuentes & Moctezuma, 2006; Cifuentes, 1992; Lastra, 1992), as rural social structures were reconfigured by competition over land and resources among

---

<sup>19</sup> This figure is liable to be contested; the creole population alone is estimated to be 18% in this period (Ernesto de la Torre Villar, 2010:137), plus other ethnic groups are present (who would use Spanish, rather than MIL); however both are communicating the pace and scale of language shift in this period.

<sup>20</sup> The process of winning independence lasts more than a decade, from before the 1810 declaration until the 1821 Proclamation of Mexican Independence; the 1824 First Constitution of the Independent Republic is followed by a series of reforms in following decades and more importantly, the 1836 breakaway of Texas and 1846-8 war and occupation by US forces, in which 55% of Mexican territory was ceded to the US. The 1857 Constitution of the Second Federal Republic was soon followed by French invasion and rule in the period known as the 'Second Mexican Empire' from 1862-7; Government constitutions are written in Spanish but none declare it as the official language; MIL are absent from mention and no MIL translations are made until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. See <http://www.juridicas.unam.mx/infjur/leg/conshist/pdf/1824.pdf> and [1857.pdf](http://www.juridicas.unam.mx/infjur/leg/conshist/pdf/1857.pdf) and [1917.pdf](http://www.juridicas.unam.mx/infjur/leg/conshist/pdf/1917.pdf)



emergent classes of *caciques* or agents accumulating localised social and economic power. In the subsequent century (1910-2010), this decline slowed as such social upheaval settled but the decline remained steady as rural MIL communities began losing their capacity for subsistence.

The criteria for enumerating MIL-speakers have frequently changed (Cifuentes & Moctezuma, 2006) but by the bicentenary of independence in 2010, it seems clear that this percentage had halved again, in a range of 6% to 9% (INEGI, 2011c; INALI, 2008). However, MIL-speakers recovered their numbers in absolute terms to pre-conquest levels during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a fact attributed to higher birth rates among MIL-speaking communities (relative to others), and falling mortality rates, primarily due to improving rural access to primary and preventive health care (Bartolomé, 2006). This serves as a reminder that MIL revitalisation policy must necessarily extend its scope beyond purely linguistic questions to social well-being.

**Figure 2.1 shows change in the known range of MIL, numbers and relative size of the MIL-speaking population in Mexico since independence**

Year		Diversity of MIL	Speakers (millions)	% of pop.
1521	Spanish Crown displaces Aztec rule	147	7-9	--
1810	War of Independence from Spain		3.84	64
1910	Mexican Revolution	60	-	13
1930	1st census interrogating language		2.25	13.6
1940			2.49	12.7
1950			2.44	9.5
1960			3.03	8.7
1970			3.11	6.5
1980			5.18	7.8
1990			5.28	6.7
2000			6.04	6.2
2010	Most recent census Centenary of Revolution Bicentenary of War of Independence	90	7-9	6 – 9

Nevertheless, a vastly expanded Spanish-speaking population means that, at the beginning of the 21st century, MIL-speakers still represent well below a tenth of citizens, even though the rate of MIL loss slowed down importantly since the 1950s. A possible interpretation of the situation in Mexico could be Fishman's (1991) notion of a plateau effect or resilient rump of language maintenance, as a feature of language loss, rather than as a contradiction. Whether or not this applies, what is

notable is that the statistical trends of language loss in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries stand in stark contrast to one another, and that both can be juxtaposed with the colonial period.

In terms of Spanish, nationalist elites pre- and post-independence had documented Mexican Spanish as a legitimate variety distinct from Castilian (Cifuentes, 1992:15; Mar-Molinero, 2000) and the *Academia de la Lengua Mexicana* was one of the earliest to emerge in the Americas (Mar-Molinero, 2000). Mexican Spanish became, de facto, the language of the newly independent nation, even if never formally sanctioned, serving perhaps as metaphor the way power changed hands from external Spanish elites to internal creole or locally-born elites of Spanish heritage (who styled themselves as *americanos* (Anderson, 1983:62) rather than *españoles*) who centralised resources and power towards themselves and competed with one another over control.

Government policy and rhetoric became intimately bound-up with language management during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, meaning that Mexican Spanish offered not just a distinctive, elite character or pragmatic lingua franca, but could be instrumentalised in the assimilation of the nation's diverse linguistic groups (Bonfil Batalla, 1987; Mallon, 1995, Mar Molinero, 2000). Indeed, the conscious, discursive, ideological and political construction of a concept of national identity (with a single national language) has been extensively analysed as a definitive feature of Mexican history and function of state-building post-independence and, a century later, of institutionalising the revolution (Bonfil Batalla, 1987; Mallon, 1995; Mar-Molinero, 2000; Hidalgo, 2006b).

As the centralisation of power was asserted through a single, national language, the presumption of authority by *americanos* (Mallon, 1995) was consolidated by borrowing colonial stereotypes of MIL cultures as intellectually or morally inferior. At the same time, narratives of ambivalence of allegiance among MIL communities (such as more loyalty to local rather than national seats of power) served as political premise to entrench concepts of national identity-in-language for a nascent state apparatus which was confronting both federalist factions and the aggressive 19<sup>th</sup> century expansionism of the US.

This aggressive expansionism was evidenced in the gradual colonisation of northern Mexican territories by English-speaking US settlers, which culminated in the state of Texas declaring its independence, followed shortly by annexation to the US in 1845 (Bazant, 1991). The war with Mexico which ensued (1846-1848)<sup>21</sup> and brief occupation of Mexico City resulted in the loss of vast areas of mineral-rich northern provinces to the US, estimated to be half Mexico's national territory at the time (Katz, 1991). Less than two decades later, Mexico was subject to French invasion and rule (1862-67) in the period known as the 'Second Mexican Empire' (Katz, 1991).<sup>22</sup> In other words, Mexico was still shaking off the 'Old World', even as its existence was under threat in the new one. Therefore, a heightened sense of urgency infused the project to consolidate Mexico as a securely-boundaried, autonomous nation, with strong adhesion to a clearly-defined national and linguistic identity.<sup>23</sup>

The existential threat to the nation (experienced within and beyond its borders) and the social upheavals of rupture from colonial rule, reconstruction, nation-building, prolonged war, armed conflict, and eventual socio-political revolution, contextualise the widespread shift to a single national language in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Personal, social and linguistic identities become the arena of profound ideological contention, and these outcomes should be discussed as the deferred products of historic conquest (alongside concurrent products), and as legacies of colonialism which, as the literature shows, (Ndlangamandla, 2010; Kamwangamalu, 2008; Kouega, 2008) are found replicated in many post-independence nations.

This inevitable project of identity-formation in the struggle for independence and nation-building would gain intensity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century post-revolution. A nascent revolutionary state sought to incorporate the counter-structures from which it had emerged, especially in respect of rural and MIL communities. Mexico's pre-Columbian civilizations were instrumentalised in public discourses to foster

---

<sup>21</sup> Often styled the Mexican-American War, some Mexicans consider such characterisation revisionist.

<sup>22</sup> In the present day, annual commemorations of the war continue in Puebla; notably these ceremonies highlight the indigenous linguistic cultures of the northern sierra poblana who formed legions to fight the French, such as the Zacapoaxtla Battalion.

<sup>23</sup> This viewpoint might be rather top-down, by focusing upon official discourses and policies of elites, rather than ordinary people (including MIL communities). Mallon (1995) argues that research on popular agency is needed to balance such one-dimensional narratives. Popular conceptualisations of the nation-state and aspirations to determine its character may or may not contradict the substance of discourses managed by elites, and interests can even strategically coincide at given moments.

engagement with this project (Anderson, 1983), and celebration of indigenous heritage distinguished Mexico from the persona of the US.

In the formation of these discourses of identity, two important ideological trends emerge: first, that the past is better acknowledged than the present: MIL communities are remembered in historic terms, and often in relation to the identity of the Mexican state, while their current presence and agency is overlooked and questions of power and decision-making in policy (including language) less often articulated. Second, that MIL cultures would come to be stylised in largely amorphous, generic terms, for the purposes of public discourses, rather than recognised with their linguistic and cultural specificity, meaning that public awareness of MIL characteristics and diversity (in the past and present) was undermined.

In this way, seemingly contradictory responses of adhesion to the Spanish language on the one hand, and recourse to an (amorphous) indigenous identity on the other, together demarcate the Mexican nation from old and new enemies. At the same time, each functions to gloss over and blur MIL diversity, to foster ideologies of *mestizaje*, and to use Bartolomé's (2006) terms, to engage a plurilingual and pluricultural population in 'ethnic transit' towards mestizo identity.

In Mexico *mestizaje* does not so much imply either a widespread 'racial' mixing between European and indigenous populations (although this occurred), or the deliberate policy of 'whitening' the population through mass European immigration, seen elsewhere in the Americas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Wade, 2005). Rather, it refers more to the construction of a blended identity, informed by generic indigeneity, and articulated with the white European norms of locally-born creoles. Mestizo identity references indigenous so as to index historicity and sovereignty, but references European/white, so as to index neo-colonial notions of 'modernity' (Gómez Izquierdo et al, 2011; Hartog et al, 2005).<sup>24</sup>

Crucially, this cultural duality is not equally valorised and in effect, functions to locate Mexican identity within, rather than beyond, the hegemonic reach of discourses which privilege white/European/US identities. In other words, this ideologically constructed identity divests the nation of its diverse, contemporary,

---

<sup>24</sup> See similar argument by Devine Guzman (2005:94) in relation to Brasil.

autochthonous identities, rooted in the territorial and linguistic particularity of MIL cultures. Importantly, this ‘imagined’ identity (after Anderson, 1983) is mutable, generic and hegemonic. Meanwhile, the implications of identities are far from imaginary, as will be seen in this study when MIL-speakers recount (in Chapter 4) their reception in public services. Indigenous identities may have been symbolically idealised, but on the ground MIL communities have faced existential threat from successive elites of colonial, creole, and globalised identities. The more the persona of the new nation state inserted itself into MIL speakers’ lives and communities, the more precarious their capacity for economic, cultural and linguistic reproduction.

Post-revolution, a determinant period in Mexico’s formation of identity and nation was the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40) who articulated the social goals of the revolution and the relative disadvantage of MIL communities. Widespread rural land reform was accompanied by the establishment of a Department of Indian Affairs and professional bodies to curate Mexico’s indigenous linguistic and cultural diversity;<sup>25</sup> and in 1940, the Mexican government hosted the continent’s first InterAmerican Indigenist Conference at Pátzcuaro (Norbert & Reyhner, 2002).<sup>26</sup>

Contradictorily, the economic and social reforms of the period are argued to have consolidated liberal economic reforms begun in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which were embedding market relations into rural production: ‘the regime [of Cárdenas] sought to subsume the Indian to the mass of workers and peasants, stressing class over ethnicity’ (Knight, 1991:268). In this view, MIL-speakers’ capacity to achieve relative autonomy from national socio-economic culture through subsistence agriculture was further compromised.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> The Department of Indian Affairs was founded in 1936 (subsumed by the Ministry of Education in 1947, Escobar, 2013) and has been re-configured as multiple iterations since then; the Assembly of Philologists and Linguists was founded in 1939 and both bodies contributed to the Pátzcuaro Conference and subsequent establishment of the National Indigenist Institute in 1948 (Norbert & Reyhner, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> Note how in this context MIL identity is bound up with Mexico’s national identity in international fora; it would be decades until national MIL groups participated in the Congreso Indígena ‘Fray Bartolomé de las Casas’ in Chiapas in 1974, with patronage from the Catholic Church, followed by the national Congreso Nacional Indígena at Pátzcuaro in 1975.

<sup>27</sup> Notwithstanding the above, the agrarian reform of the Mexican Revolution has also been characterised as unique in Latin America for a) dismantling and ‘re-peasantising’ large colonial estates; b) preserving rainforests and biodiversity by keeping lands under collective control of indigenous communities and small-scale organic production; factors which later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century would contribute to agro-ecological political movements fusing indigenous economic, environmental and social concerns; see Altieri & Toledo (2011).

20<sup>th</sup> century post-revolution reforms also accelerated urbanisation and rural-urban migration, culminating in the birth of the first modern-day Latin American megalopolis, Mexico City.<sup>28</sup> As rural life became unsustainable, or less sustainable relative to apparent benefits accruing in urban, Spanish-speaking centres, so MIL speakers were dislocated from strongholds and pushed or pulled towards the market's national centre. This physical rupture consolidated further a sense of new national, revolutionary order and identity into the everyday experience of citizens (Knight, 1991).

In crude terms, as salaried workers and property owners, citizens become accountable as individuals, rather than as collectives, answerable to anonymous, legalistically framed authorities, including state-sanctioned unions, rather than identifiable elders or structures of ethnolinguistic or religious character; where once social and linguistic identity was aligned to territory and physical space, accessed through community membership, citizens become de-territorialised by private, corporate or government interests, and become recipients of state benefits and services, rather than participants in redistributive systems and networks.

It is this measure of profound, holistic, socio-cultural adjustment (or imposition), experienced at the individual and collective level, which illustrates Bartolomé's idea of 'ethnic transit':

in Mexico, the process of *mestizaje* is not only biological, but above all social and cultural; this is why persons who are racially [sic] indigenous can culturally assimilate and define themselves as *mestizo* [...] an act which supposes the acceptance of another's lifestyle and the rejection of one's own, including the act of not teaching one's language to one's children.  
(Bartolomé, 2006:23)

However, the stark cultural binary the quote proposes is somewhat contentious, not least because it only emphasises MIL-speaking social actors as inevitable objects of cultural shift or integration into a national, mestizo, Spanish-speaking Mexican

---

<sup>28</sup> However, the pre-Columbian cities of Tenochtitlan in the central Mexican basin, and Cholula in modern-day Puebla state, had arguably also functioned as megalopolises of multilingual, multicultural character over centuries, adding complexity to this modern argument of inevitable acculturation in migration and urbanisation.

identity; rather, there is a need to bear in mind that subjects also consciously and actively engage with such processes.

Furthermore, such acknowledgement does not detract from an important inter-related argument that this identity shift was (and is) premised on and accelerated by negative, enduringly colonial notions of MIL-speaking communities. Such notions are observable in explicit attitudes: for example, when MIL-speaking communities are negatively characterised as suffering from a backwardness of their own making (Bonfil Batalla, 1987); at other times these prejudices are detectable in the implicit racism of asymmetries of power and paternalism in public policy, including language.

For example, rural literacy programmes of the 1930s and 1940s (Mar-Molinero, 2000) which were reconfigured and re-adopted decades later, are now characterised in the literature in such terms. They largely illustrate two main approaches to education in MIL-predominant communities: either use of MIL in early years as a stepping-stone to literacy in Spanish; or the prohibition of MIL from the onset of contact with the education system (Norbert & Reyhner, 2002). Despite apparent polarities, each approach is argued to have successfully served to instil Spanish and to transit students to its exclusive use.

In other words, public sector education was instrumentalised to fortify national Mexican linguistic and cultural identity, and by design or default to erode MIL-use. Indeed, it led Hidalgo (1994) to conclude at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that ‘all [education] methods are equally successful in helping speakers of IMTs [Indian Mother Tongues] to shift to Spanish’ (1994:193). Both educational approaches were essentially integrationist and assimilationist in nature and, as with other linguistically diverse nations in post-independence contexts, conceptualised education as a vehicle for national unity (Ndlangamandla, 2010).

As such, education became the arena of nationalist and paternalist enterprise, inculcating Mexican identity, Spanish monolingualism, and prevailing ideologies of language. Such dogmas included the reification of literate Western cultures over oral MIL cultures, so that false dichotomies emerged of modern/traditional and developed/backward, mapped onto written/oral and Spanish/MIL linguistic cultures



respectively, evidenced in the hegemony of print capitalism (Anderson, 1983) and monolingual literacy in education policy (Mar-Molinero, 2000).

Meanwhile, the potency of a concept of national cultural and linguistic identity arguably lies, first, in the fact that it references contradictory, amorphous, dependent constructs, and so can be continually re-imagined; and second, that it has been modelled by those best served by its discursive power and the narratives it constructs.

Indeed, discourses of identity have been continually implicated as sites of contention during recurring periods of social unrest in Mexico since the revolution. Social movements which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, informed by a Latin American blend of secular Marxism and Catholic liberation theology, constructed a nexus between faith, socio-cultural and linguistic identity among rural and especially MIL communities, mobilising public resistance to government injustices (Muñoz, 2010; Hidalgo, 2006b).

Of note is that successive indigenous mobilisations of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century were calling not so much for indigenist government policy, as for indigenous agency in determining and implementing policy (IWGIA, 2001). The civil disobedience of the EZLN or Zapatista militias in Chiapas and their subsequent ‘siege’ of Mexico City in January 1994 led to the government signing the San Andrés or SALA Accords in 1996.<sup>29</sup> These endorsed the political autonomy of a defined range of MIL communities in Chiapas which, de facto, were Zapatista-controlled.<sup>30</sup>

Whilst apparently ceding political control, this government response illustrates an effective, well-established pattern of co-optation and incorporation of social movements in 20<sup>th</sup> century Mexico, which ultimately strengthens the state. Social unrest (including ‘indigenous’), is met by the creation of conferences, institutes,

---

<sup>29</sup> The Zapatista Army of National Liberation or EZLN is said to date back to 1983, which coincides with the timeline of Totonac organising discussed in the next chapter (2.3). This Zapatista uprising (1st January 1994) marked the day the NAFTA Free Trade agreement came into force, so should be understood within a broader context of political opposition. At the end of 1994, the EZLN declared 32 autonomous municipalities or parallel local governments, placing more than a third of Chiapas under the control of Zapatista social structures, rather than the apparatus of local or national government (Mora, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> The 1996 San Andrés Larráinzar or SALA Accords recognise ‘*pueblos indios*’ as collective political subjects and validate concepts of ‘self-determination’ and ‘autonomy’ in stated territories (Warren & Jackson, 2002:32).



social programmes, statutes and legislation.<sup>31</sup> Such concessions function to consolidate power, and exemplify how a state can institutionalise (and reclaim) processes of political change begun from below.

Nevertheless, it is clear that a historic turning point was reached when the state negotiated with the EZLN: social mobilisation under the banner of MIL identity had succeeded in securing economic investment and physical infrastructure for MIL-dominant communities, and as important, greater autonomy over managing local resources.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the potency of MIL identity in public discourses had been amplified, highlighting the need for the governing PRI<sup>33</sup> and an emergent electoral opposition to quickly reformulate ideologies, policies, and discourses of MIL.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century therefore opened with significant political change: the PRI was defeated for the first time in seventy years,<sup>34</sup> Zapatistas consolidated autonomous zones in Chiapas, and initiatives on MIL revitalisation multiplied. Mexico's International Mother Language Day<sup>35</sup> was followed by the establishment of a National Institute of Indigenous Languages (INALI), a range of bilingual education reforms, the establishment of intercultural universities in MIL communities and legislation on language rights, including official status for MIL in their territories.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> For example, in 1978 the General Directorate of Indigenous Education or DGEI was founded (DGEI, 2013), and the same year Miguel León Portilla, anthropologist, historian and advisor to the Mexican government and Ministry of Education translated and published Emiliano Zapata's revolutionary manifesto in Náhuatl (Ligorred, 1992; Norbert & Reyhner, 2002). Mexico marked the Columbus Quincentenary of 1992 by reforming its 1917 constitution, inserting Article 4 to 'recognise' and 'support' MIL (DGEI, 2013).

<sup>32</sup> Space does not permit debate of the complex and contradictory character of Zapatista and other Mexican social movements claiming indigenous identity; see (Pitarch, 1998) for debate.

<sup>33</sup> PRI or Partido Revolucionario Institucional is the highly centralist and centrist party which has governed Mexico almost uninterrupted during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

<sup>34</sup> The PRI was defeated nationally in 2000 after broad-based mobilising notably including rural and indigenous groups. For example, all presidential candidates in the 2000 elections except the PRI endorsed a manifesto constructed by six national indigenous organisations and published in *La Jornada* newspaper, 19th May 2000; (IWGIA, 2001:74). The first term of office of the new right-wing PAN (Partido Acción Nacional) was marked by a rapid succession of legislation on MIL rights under President Vicente Fox.

<sup>35</sup> See UN documents at <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/49/a49r214.htm>; This UNESCO initiative is in the context of the 1994 UN declaration of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

<sup>36</sup> The 2001 General Law of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is available at <http://www.cddhcu.gob.mx/leyinfo/pdf.257.pdf>; the 2003 General Law on Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2003 granted MIL 'official status within their own territories, where they would alternate with Spanish in conditions of equality' (see Pellicer, Cifuentes, & Herrera, 2006: 136).

On this point, it is important to recall that the conceptualisation of linguistic rights principally as the protection of speech forms, rather than the human rights of speakers, is not only erroneous, but oppressive (see Freeland's argument in 2013, 2010). This thesis also argues that a fixation on speech forms constitutes part of an ideological pattern which diminishes the status and personhood of the MIL-speaker, and fixates on cultural products (such as langue-use) rather than on holistic well-being. A more critical approach to language rights should take issue with their articulation primarily as legalistic constructs, and as statutory items to be merited by some, not others, and which successive governments can design and bestow according to their own interests. Not least, the mobilisations of MIL communities, and their wider sociolinguistic context have indicated that MIL vitality, diversity, numbers of speakers, notions of identity, cultural and social networks, capacity for socio-economic reproduction, distribution of political power and physical and cultural well-being, are all intimately interconnected factors. Therefore, conceptualisations of language rights and policy responses on MIL must necessarily acknowledge such interdependencies.

For this reason, after providing a snapshot of current linguistic and ideological context concerning MIL cultures and identities in the next section (2.2), the chapter considers how the agency and subjectivity of local social actors have been significant in the formation of ideologies of MIL identity and local revitalisation of MIL culture. Such revitalisation is articulated as not only linguistic forms, but as socio-economic and educational initiatives to claim greater cultural control (outlined in the subsequent chapter on Research Milieu and Methods).

## **2.2 Contemporary MIL identities: diversity, discourses and speakers**

This section of the chapter addresses the contemporary context to this doctoral study in terms of national linguistic diversity, discourses of MIL, MIL-use and numbers of speakers, to inform further discussion of the valorisation and minoritisation of MIL. Despite the historic shift to Spanish described in the opening section of this chapter, Mexico is still reputed to have the greatest indigenous language diversity and highest number of indigenous language speakers in the Americas (Terborg, García Landa, & Moore, 2007), meaning that even if figures on current MIL-use appear small, they have continental and global significance.<sup>37</sup>

The most recent census data (2010) at the time this study commenced suggests that speakers of MIL aged three years and over constitute more than 6% of the national population (INEGI, 2011c). In numerical terms, this represents approximately seven million people, and is likely to be a conservative estimate. Other government sources suggest 8% and even 9% (INALI, 2008). The MIL with the highest numbers of speakers are the Náhuatl language families, with over a million and a half speakers distributed across the country but mostly concentrated in central Mexico, followed by the Mayan language families, spoken in the Yucatan Peninsula. The Totonac language family is believed by most sources to number approximately a quarter of a million speakers, ranking number eight nationally in terms of MIL population size, and encompassing a number (as yet unsettled) of non-mutually intelligible languages and dialects. Indeed, Totonac languages are under-researched and some remain undocumented (Grinevald, 2008:81).

The theoretical contextualisation to this study (Chapter 1) discussed the importance of language management according to domains and purposes, and the 2010 Mexican census does provide some useful, albeit limited information on speech domains where indigenous languages are reportedly in use. The census data does not specify whether MIL are the main, sole or simply one possible language of communication in a given domain; rather, the census limits itself to noting, in those communities which government functionaries have identified as indigenous, the relative extent of

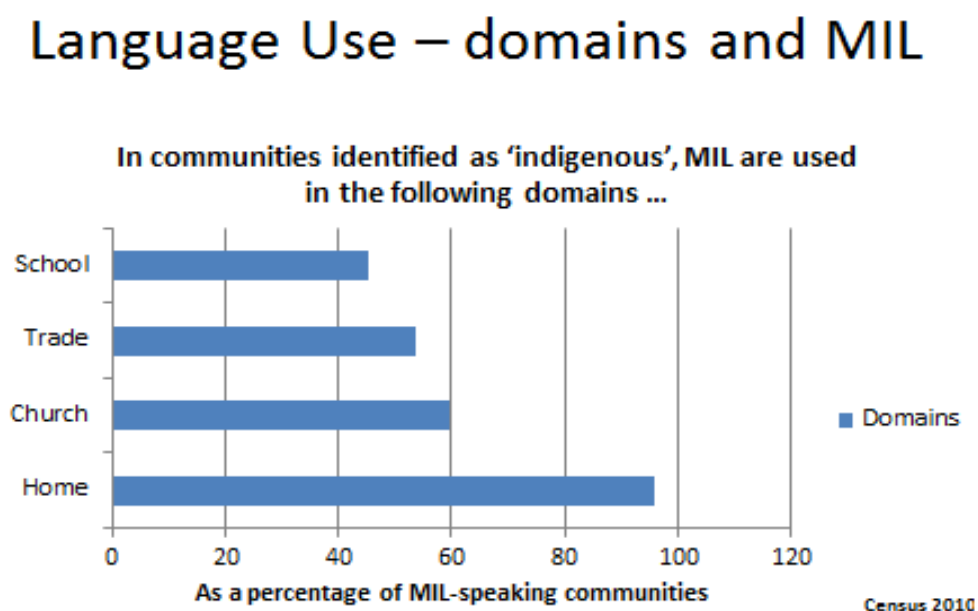
---

<sup>37</sup> Mexico is placed sixth of the world's twenty most linguistically diverse countries (Romaine, 2009:449).

MIL use across a limited selection of domains which the census designers have specified.

The most important domain for use of MIL is the home. MIL are spoken twice as much in the home as they are at school; the second most important domain is ‘church’. This importance of religious life in the profile of language management is noted in the questionnaire employed in this study and this theme re-emerges shortly in this chapter’s discussion of the role of Christian agents in MIL maintenance. The term ‘church’ in the census lacks specificity as a concept but highlights its pertinence. It may only indicate the use of MIL in Sunday church services, rather than more frequent faith-based public ritual, or the intergenerational and inter-familial networking that takes place at cultural and social events associated with religious feasts and the church calendar, especially in rural communities. MIL-use by domain according to the 2010 census is seen in Figure 2.2 below.

**Figure 2.2 shows MIL- use by domain according to the 2010 census**



In terms of linguistic diversity, the current major compendium of MIL is the Mexican National Catalogue of Indigenous Languages (2008) compiled by INALI, the National Institute of Indigenous Languages, operating under the auspices of

CONACULTA (National Commission for Culture and the Arts).<sup>38</sup> INALI identifies 364 MIL speech varieties from 68 language groupings pertaining to 11 language families, and these figures both inform and are informed by national census data on language use, meaning that language indices constructed by the National Office of Statistics (henceforth INEGI) are highly implicated.<sup>39</sup> In turn, INEGI currently recognises 90 spoken MIL, according to indices employed in the 2010 census (INEGI, 2011c) and the 2005 national survey (INEGI, 2005). INEGI's more conservative estimate is classified into 42 language groups pertaining to 12 language families, some of which run across national borders north and south.<sup>40</sup> MIL are widely distributed, with important concentrations in the southern and central regions of the republic.

Depiction of national linguistic patrimony and construction of taxonomies fixing boundaries and relationships between languages, dialects, linguistic groups, families and stocks (Nichols, 1997) is more than a complex technical exercise mapping linguistic forms; rather, it necessarily draws upon historical relationships of cooperation and competition between speakers and non-speakers of a given code, and an investment of language beliefs, attitudes and identities in the use and portrayal of language (Preston, 1999). In other words, it is unsurprising that first, disparities should exist in the number and classification of MIL by different national and international bodies, with diverse objectives, at given historical moments; and second, that contextual political sensitivities should be implicated.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> INALI employs the vernacular term *variantes*, which MIL speakers also popularly use (in Spanish) to refer to distinct indigenous speech varieties, without knowing or implying it is a discrete MIL language, or the local dialect of a MIL language (Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas, 2008). However, Spanish-speakers often refer to all indigenous speech forms as *dialectos* or 'dialects'.

<sup>39</sup> Other sources, such as Ethnologue, posit at least 250 languages are in use (Lewis, 2009). In the background documents to the 2010 census, INEGI states that language 'family' (the more usual term in international literature) has been substituted among local linguists with the term language 'group'. INEGI's 2010 index recognises 94 discrete languages, two of which are Mayan sign languages and two of Indo-European or African origin, hence its enumeration of 90 spoken MIL. Its 42 'language groupings', although arranged according to a different formation, mostly coincide with the 'language families' listed by SIL in Ethnologue (see below).

<sup>40</sup> For example, languages of the Tepiman family are also spoken in Arizona in the US, and languages of the Náhuatl family are spoken in Central America (Lewis, 2009).

<sup>41</sup> For example, a disparity between INEGI and INALI sources concerns the number of individual or language groups referred to as 'Chontal'. The word simply means 'outsider' or 'other' in Náhuatl, and so may denote both generic and specific languages. Similarly, many officially recorded MIL names are often just Hispanicised versions of Náhuatl terms superimposed during Aztec rule.

Informing the Mexican government's representations of MIL diversity are three important international, inter-related sources: UNESCO's 'Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger' (Moseley, 2010), Routledge's 'Atlas of World Languages' (Asher & Moseley, 2007), and SIL International's world language index 'Ethnologue' (Lewis, 2009).<sup>42</sup> For example, basic cross-referencing shows that INEGI borrowed from SIL taxonomies in the construction of language indices for the 2010 census. In turn, INEGI has supplied census data and analysis to wider government bodies in areas such as education, policing, and healthcare (INALI, 2008: p15), as well as to INALI, which is more directly concerned with MIL maintenance and revitalisation, and such typologies and census data are instrumentalised in the design of recent language legislation.<sup>43</sup> In this way, a nexus is created between supra governmental, non-governmental, and international academic agents, and diverse Mexican government bodies in the construction of ideologies and discourses of national language identity, and implementation of language management policies.

The pertinent concern arising from this issue for the purposes of this doctoral study is to acknowledge the ideological, mutable, and contestable character of language typologies; to recognise how depictions of national language diversity are bound up with delicate political sensitivities, historical and current competing interests, and the policy implications that emerge from such discourses of diversity, including for linguistic rights and public language management.

For example, INALI's 2008 classification of MIL (referenced by INEGI in the 2010 census) features a 'new' language grouping (compared to earlier sources) of *Oaxqueña*. Oaxaca is the state with the highest percentage of speakers of indigenous languages in the republic, at five times the national average (INEGI, 2011c), and

---

<sup>42</sup> UNESCO identifies 143 indigenous languages in Mexico, all of which are considered to be in different levels of endangerment (Moseley, 2010). SIL International (the Summer Institute of Language) claims that three linguistic stocks can be identified in Mexico, to which, with some stated reservations, fourteen language families belong, plus a further six language family isolates, totalling twenty language families and 285 discrete languages, many with their own dialects (Lewis, 2009). SIL is arguably pre-eminent in language taxonomies, assigning international language classification codes, and worked closely with the government in Mexico (where it is known as the Instituto Lingüístico de Verano or ILV) on MIL research and policy until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Notwithstanding a period of estrangement, the work of SIL continues to inform Mexican government's language policy.

<sup>43</sup> The General Law on Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Ley General de Derechos Lingüísticos de los Pueblos Indígenas), passed in March 2003, granted MIL 'official status within their own territories, where they would alternate with Spanish in conditions of equality' (Pellicer, Cifuentes, & Herrera, 2006: 136).

constituting a third of the province's population. Indeed, local and national authorities have instrumentalised the diversity and vitality of Oaxaca's linguistic cultures in promoting the local economy through rural tourism, most notably as part of the national *Pueblos Mágicos* initiative (Gross, 2011).<sup>44</sup> Additionally, Oaxacan authorities have conducted public education to alter public discourses of MIL (discussed in Chapters 4 and 5).<sup>45</sup>

Oaxaca has been associated in recent times with chronic political instability, long-running strikes, and rural and urban unrest including peasant mobilisation (Goertzen, 2010; Mendoza Zuany, 2008; Bacon, 2002). In moments of threat to social cohesion, representations of indigeneity and ideologies of indigenous identity gain currency, with implications for subsequent language policy and legislation (Goertzen, 2010). Hence, it could be argued that an apparent investment (academic, political) into Oaxacan languages illustrates how linguistic documentation is bound up with top-down and bottom-up social processes which raise the profile and stakes of MIL identities and their instrumentalisation in public discourses.<sup>46</sup> When social stability is at stake, the linguistic heterogeneity of the Mexican state becomes a site of contention.

Nevertheless, the issue remains that, despite increasing international concern at the loss of global linguistic patrimony, and the evident multiplication of projects documenting Mexico's linguistic diversity (Flores Farfan, 2011), there continues to be a lack of consensus and research regarding many MIL, including some of the most endangered (Pellicer, Cifuentes, & Herrera, 2006), and not least the Totonac language family and speech form used by informants to this study (discussed shortly in section 2.2).

---

<sup>44</sup> This denomination (loosely translated as 'enchanted places') is awarded to areas of outstanding natural beauty, cultural interest and indigenous character to promote tourism: see Gross, 2011).

<sup>45</sup> Findings also discuss how Oaxacan authorities are countering the popular but inaccurate use of the term dialecto to refer to all indigenous languages, a term which informants to this study find offensive.

<sup>46</sup> Continual developments are occurring in relation to RLS and Oaxacan MIL, for example see: <http://www.noticiasnet.mx/portal/oaxaca/general/patrimonio/311531-desarrollan-app-para-aprender-15-lenguas-indigenas-oaxaca>



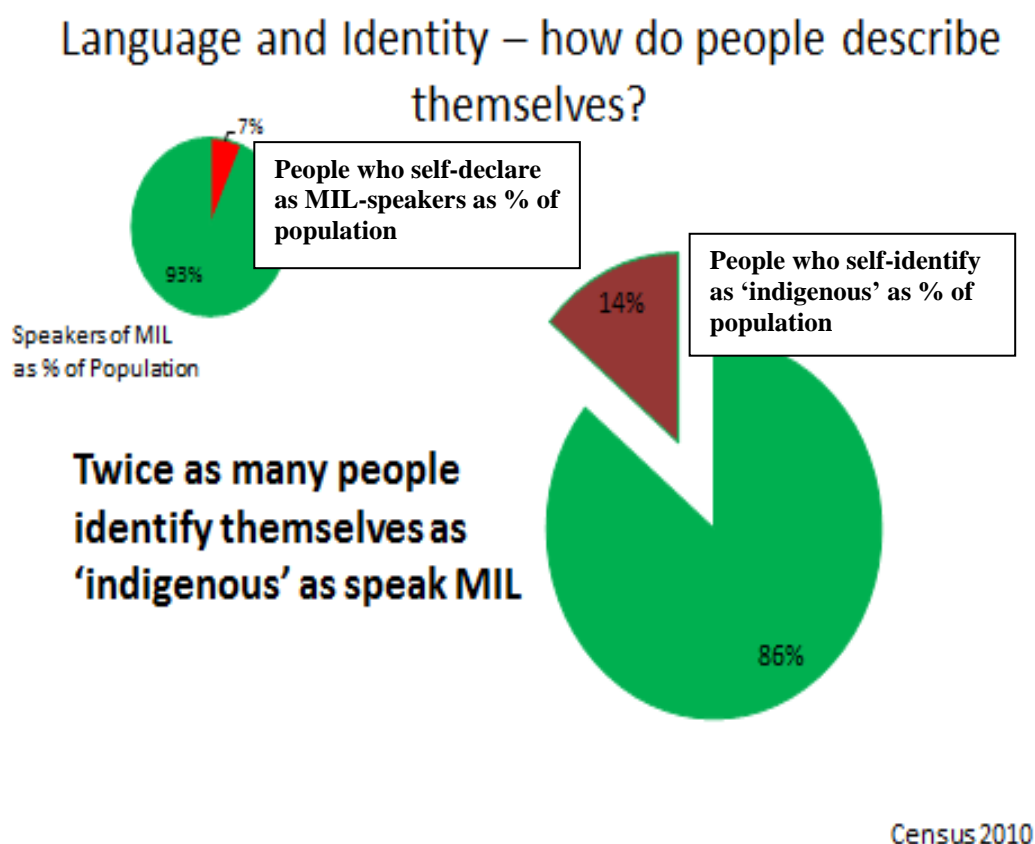
If counting Mexico's languages is contentious and sensitive territory, then these issues only serve to illustrate the continuing significance of language ideologies to government policies, and to transnational social processes of continuity and change. As others have shown (Cifuentes, 1992; Hidalgo, 2006b), and the discussion at the beginning of this chapter outlined, the perception, depiction and valorisation of linguistic identities has always been intimately connected to Mexico's trajectory of state building. In this respect, the current shifting of borders between languages, emergence of new typologies and nomenclature, and reconceptualisations of diversity, in some ways mirror the fluidity of processes that construct political and social identities, which have been the business of the nation-state since its inception, and which young MIL biculturals negotiate.

The decline in MIL populations shown earlier in the sociolinguistic timeline of events (Figure 2.1 above) is to some extent explained by the phenomena of rapid urbanisation, capitalist marketisation, and migration which dislocates social networks and disrupts inter-generational MIL transmission. However, as was suggested in discussion of language vitality in Chapter 1, a strong social outlook or awareness of cultural provenance and ethnic identity can persist beyond the duration, domains or extent of language-use. In other words, notions of ethnic identity and linguistic identity need not necessarily coincide. Similarly, valorisation of a linguistic culture or MIL, and specifically, of real contemporary speakers of MIL, is highly implicated in this process, and sensitive to context, so that language valorisation is highly sensitive to policies and processes of language management

Cultural and linguistic identities are practised and performed in a given cultural space or speech domain for specific communicative purposes. To use the terminology of GIDS, it can be said that people become situational Xmen or Ymen and perform Xish or Yish identities in the perceptions of others (Fishman, 1991). Findings (Chapter 4) will show that such performativity is routine for biculturals negotiating their context. Meanwhile, in terms of self-perceived identities, an interesting result in the Mexican census of 2010 is that twice as many nationals declared their ethnic identity as 'indigenous', compared to actual numbers of those able to speak an indigenous language (see Figure 2.3 below).



**Figure 2.3 shows that twice the number of people who speak a MIL choose to define themselves as ‘indigenous’**



In other words, the analysis of the census indicates further the importance of problematizing the real-world purposes and impacts of any form of interrogation of language-use, any categorisation of self-referential identities, and the relationship between the two exercises.

Similar to language classifications, typologies of identities in public discourse such as the 2010 census are not constructed in an ideological vacuum; rather their instrumentalisation communicates interconnected ideologies that distribute citizenship and status as forms of social capital. That an institutional agent has the capacity and authority to conduct such an enquiry de facto legitimises the premises and purposes for doing so. Each inquiry further consolidates the position of the enquirer, and each application of its typologies legitimates the boundaries of their inquiry, and the range of admissible discourses regarding identities. Indeed, as Saldívar et al note (2014:472), the ‘statistical concern of the state’ with indigenous

identities (measured through the proxy of language-use) is communicated to its citizens in successive censuses.

In other words, both the discussion of typologies of languages and of social identities exemplify the ideological limitations of ideological constructs that inform language policy. Moreover, there are tangible implications, as this study goes on to investigate, for citizens and speakers (persons) who accept, reject, or are conferred with or denied, a social and linguistic identity in a given historical context.<sup>47</sup> These social consequences serve as reminders of the necessity of continually unpicking and reflecting upon the conceptual premises, tools and conduct of academic inquiry, as well as public policy formation, mindful that seemingly abstract notions produce visceral consequences.

In sum, the extent to which a speaker's performance of language-use or management defines their self-perceived social identity is already complex (Fought, 2006b); for the MIL-speaker, meanwhile, the context and motives by which such identity is conferred on them, and interpreted, by others, (governments, compatriots, foreigners), whether apparently well- or ill-intentioned, necessarily enmeshes valorisation of the MIL-speaker with wider social and historical processes beyond their personal orbit, and expressed in ideologies and policies of language management.

---

<sup>47</sup> For example, the 2010 census also reveals that 6% of those who speak MIL did not self-identify as 'indigenous' (INEGI, 2011).

## 2.2.1 Discourses of MIL and Totonac linguistic culture

### Historical Totonac Culture

Having discussed the complexity and mutability of social and linguistic identities in Mexico, this section moves on to briefly introduce the historic Totonac polity and discuss recent research in Totonac languages, before considering representations of Totonac speakers in public discourses as a function of language valorisation and social minoritisation. Totonac languages and modern-day cultures, it will be argued, remain under-researched relative to the interest in pre-Columbian Totonac civilisation; moreover, the restricted nature of public discourses of Totonac fails to communicate either the historic or the contemporary political and cultural vitality of Totonac cultures.

Totonac cultures are reputedly the oldest in the Americas (Krickeberg, 1964; William-García, 1987, Croda León 2005); in the late pre-classical period, predecessors of the polities that centuries later would come to form the Totonac linguistic, cultural, and territorial nation, are said to have established the great pyramids and ceremonial city-state of Teotihuacán (now part of the modern-day state of Mexico).<sup>48</sup> As the city declined, these ancestral polities are believed to have migrated southeast from the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century onwards towards the highlands and Atlantic coast, and by circa 618AD were well established in the eastern Sierra Madre (Stresser-Péan, 2009).<sup>49</sup> At its height, the *Totonacapan* or Totonac linguistic and cultural homeland stretched across the northern highlands of the modern day states of Puebla and Hidalgo, down to the lowlands of modern-day Veracruz on the Gulf of

---

<sup>48</sup> Franciscan historian Fray Juan de Torquemada (1562 – 1624), who collected oral histories from indigenous polities, situated Totonacs among the founders of Teotihuacán (William-García, 1987; Croda León, 2005). He estimated this vast, multilingual and multicultural city in the Mexican Central Valley with its great pyramids of the sun and moon had been established in the late pre-classical period from circa 100BC, to be overtaken a thousand years later by Aztec cultures. With a population reaching 125,000, this imperial centre wielded influence throughout Mesoamerica until its peak in the VI century (Morales Lara, 2008; Stresser Péan, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> Decline was sparked by a combination of factors including Popoloca invasion in the V century, according to Torquemada, and internal rebellion fuelled by drought conditions in this era; eventual destruction came in a great fire in the VI century (William-García, 1987). The 618AD estimate stems from Stresser Péan's (2009) calculations, after comparing histories compiled by Torquemada from pre- and post-conquest sources, with oral histories taken from informants in the sierra. The ability to reconstruct the past from inter-generational oral history transmission is a highly interesting claim of this project.

Mexico, and was bordered by the Czones River to the north, and either the La Antigua river or the Papaloapan River to the south.<sup>50</sup>

Moving eastwards over time, three important ceremonial cities with grandiose pyramids emerged in the Totonacapan: in the middle classical period, *Yohualichan* was established in the northern highlands of Puebla; in the late classical period *El Tajín* was founded in lowland Veracruz; and in lowland Veracruz in the late postclassical period, *Cempoala* was founded.<sup>51</sup>

Cempoala reputedly housed circa 30, 000 when Spanish conquerors arrived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and such vast city populations were supported by highly developed agriculture (Krickeberg, 1964). Its ceremonial sites were sustained by advanced skill in mathematics, architecture and engineering, while aesthetically complex ceramics index a highly developed artisanal, ritual, and artistic culture (Krickeberg, 1964:323-334).

Together, these three sites of Yohualichan, El Tajín and Cempoala are often referred to (in the literature and by informants) as the three components or hearts in the historic name given to their polity, Tutunakú (the term /'tutu/ in Totonac means 'three' and /na'ku/ means 'heart(s)').<sup>52</sup> The first Spanish text believed to reference Totonac cultures is a letter sent by Hernán Cortés to King Charles V of Spain in July 1519, the first of five reports or *cartas de relación* sent between 1519 and 1526 (Morales Lara, 2008).<sup>53</sup> These depict Totonac societies of impressive complexity

---

<sup>50</sup> The Totonacapan encompassed approximately 7000 square km (Del Amo Rodríguez & Moctezuma Pérez, 2008:2); the La Antigua border is according to Morales Lara (2008) who cites Lombardo Toledano (1931) and Palerm (1952) and also by Masferrer Kan (2004) and Krickeberg (1964); however the Papaloapan River is given by Melgarejo (1943) and cited in Velázquez Hernández (1995) and Morales Lara (2008).

<sup>51</sup> Cempoala is not a Totonac term, but a Spanish transliteration of an earlier Náhuatl superimposition.

<sup>60</sup> In Spanish this transliterates to (*el*) *Totonaco*, referring to the language, and *Totonaca* as both the noun and adjective for the polity and culture. It pluralises but does not modify for gender, e.g. *los totonacas* (the Totonacs); *los pueblos totonacas* (the Totonac people)

<sup>53</sup> The Cortés letter is lost, but its contents are alluded to in subsequent correspondence, which recalls its observations of interactions with Totonacs. See <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/IbrAmerTxt/IbrAmerTxt-idx?type=HTML&rgn=div1&byte=8531919> The full text of the four subsequent reports has been translated and edited into a number of volumes, available for open access at: [http://archive.org/stream/lettersofcorts01cortuoft/lettersofcorts01cortuoft\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/lettersofcorts01cortuoft/lettersofcorts01cortuoft_djvu.txt)

<sup>53</sup> Cortés associated primarily with elite groups (Stresser-Péan, 2009) meaning elaborate external features of Totonac culture such as precious adornments were recorded by early colonial chroniclers, including Díaz del Castillo, Bernal (1585) published in 1965 as *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico, 1517-1521*.

and wealth, and where societal bilinguality was the norm, including the use of Náhuatl (the Aztec imperial language) as *lingua franca*.

Prior to Spanish conquest, the economic vitality of the Totonacapan had attracted Aztec/Mexica expansionists from their imperial seat at Tenochtitlán or modern-day Mexico City (Stresser-Péan, 2009). The rule imposed on Totonac cultures during the 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries by Aztec elites might be characterised as a pragmatic form of economic subjugation, seeking to extract benefit from a thriving culture. Importantly, its arm's length character allowed the polity, albeit subjugated, to retain a degree of internal integrity and shared identity, including language. Nonetheless, an increasingly heavy and unjust burden of Aztec tribute meant that when Cortés arrived on Totonac coastlines in 1519, Totonac elites were disposed towards coalition with other polities, including Tlaxcaltecas, to supplant Aztec rule in a strategic military accord with the Spanish (Schmal, 2004).<sup>54</sup>

The Spanish massacre of the Aztec emperor Moctezuma II and the population at Tenochtitlán, subsequent loss of life due to the regime implanted by Cortés and his successors, and the impact of European diseases, have continually featured in Mexican post-revolutionary popular discourses which consolidate Mexican national identity, for example, in school text books and public art. In these discourses, it can be argued, the Mexica/Aztec Empire has come to signify the Mexican nation in generic terms, rather than a specific socio-historic polity and construct; therefore, the actions of Totonacs and Tlaxcaltecas have been framed more as collaborations or treachery, than as the contingent or defensive responses of distinct indigenous polities within pluricultural Mexican territories.

The conceptual amorphisation of ethnolinguistic identities is discussed at length in this thesis and argued to be a recurrent theme of Mexican historiography, because of the way these have been conceived and instrumentalised in the project of

---

<sup>54</sup> Tlaxcaltecas had notoriously resisted Aztec rule with heavy losses. Krickeberg (1964) argues that Totonac men were not engaged by the Spanish as fighting troops, but as porters, guides, and provisioners, while Benítez (1986) claims they formed an army, escorting the Spanish across the sierra to the Aztec emperor Moctezuma II, through the valley between the Popocatepetl and Iztaxíhuatl volcanos, nowadays known as the Paso de Cortés. The first encounters by Cortés had been on the Mayan Peninsula, (Krickeberg, 1964), meaning Totonacs in Cempoala (in modern-day Veracruz) were alerted to the arrival of the Spanish well ahead of such negotiations.

centralisation and nation-building. On the one hand, an amorphous notion of what might be termed ‘generic indigeneity’ allows the past to be recast, and new imprecise identities constructed and claimed in the present; on the other hand, certain identities can retain specific connotations, such that Totonac identity can be ideologically ‘tainted’ when the past is processed in such fashion.<sup>55</sup> In other words, language revalorisation and revitalisation implicate wider ideologies of identity formation and of dealing with the past, of comprehending continuity and change in MIL cultural expression and agency, and of locating contradictory social processes as power is contested between social (or even national) groups.

### **Recent Academic Discourses of Totonac**

Returning to the issue of academic research into Totonac languages and cultures, three main periods of publishing have been identified (Levy and Beck, 2012): the early colonial period, from which a small selection of texts (mostly by clergy) were re-discovered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the Cárdenas presidency and era of post-revolution reforms during the mid-twentieth century; and the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, when both indigenist and endangered language research emerged.

The aforementioned Krickeberg had been the mainstay of studies of Totonac culture until very recent decades. He had searched colonial and historical sources for references to Totonac polities to create a sizeable multi-disciplinary monograph in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1980s, a similar research exercise was undertaken by Masferrer Kan (1984), who supplemented colonial texts with socio-economic data from the *sierra poblana* up to independence (Troiani, 2004), while Stresser-Péan (2009) focussed on Totonac worldview or *cosmovisión* and the Totonac flying dance or *danza del volador*, now UNESCO intangible global patrimony (Croda Leon, 2005).

A bibliography of Totonac linguistics from the sixteenth century to 1940 was compiled by Morales Lara (2008), with annotations on the efforts of predecessors to track down early colonial texts. He believes the earliest is *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua totonaca*, by Fray Andrés de Olmos, a Franciscan who compiled the first

---

<sup>55</sup> See Burman (2014) for similar argument in relation to Bolivian indigenous identities.

grammar of Classical Náhuatl in 1547. The Totonac text has never been located but is believed to date from around the same time or earlier (Leon-Portilla, 2002). A surviving study from the later colonial period is the 1752 *Arte de la lengua totonaca* by Zambrano Bonilla, with its supplement *Doctrina de la lengua naolingo* by Domínguez. It is this text which discerns at least four distinct Totonac varieties between the highlands and lowlands (Morales Lara, 2008), a concept which significantly endured until the twenty-first century. As recently as 1990, an even earlier study of Totonac by an unknown author from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century was rediscovered (McQuown, 1990a).<sup>56</sup>

One of the most important periods of publishing on MIL was during the Cárdenas administration and the following decades of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when new studies and glossaries of Totonac emerged, notably from SIL researchers who worked closely with Mexican government agencies, until a rupture of formal relations with the organisation in the latter half of the century (Terborg et al, 2007).<sup>57</sup>

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, international enthusiasm for revitalisation of indigenous languages and cultures on all continents has generated growing interest in under-researched languages such as Totonac, and strongholds of indigenous language and culture such as the community of Huehuetla/Kgoyom where this doctoral study is based. French linguist Duna Troiani (2004; 2007) undertook the first published linguistic analysis within the community, while her compatriot, the anthropologist Nicholas Ellison (2005, 2006, 2009) analysed local context, but also wider

<sup>56</sup> The alleged 16th century grammar from San Andrés Huetlaylpan was discovered by McQuown (1990a) and published by UNAM (Autonomous University of Mexico).

<sup>57</sup> Research was largely underpinned by SIL and former students of Edward Sapir, such as Whorf, McQuown and Swadesh. Whorf (1935) published an important text on the Uto-Aztecan language family, within which he characterises Totonac as a large family of distinct languages. McQuown's prolific output on Totonac (over fifty years) also dates to the Cardenas era, as does Morris Swadesh (of Swadesh 'lists'), a language policy consultant to Cardenas (later exiled in Mexico during the McCarthy era). Wycliffe Bible translators Hermann P. Aschmann and Elisabeth Dawson de Aschmann lived in Zapotitlán de Mendez in the sierra poblana from the 1940s to 1980s, publishing extensively with SIL, including a Totonac-English dictionary in 1956, local stories and translations of the New Testament. Until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, these were probably the most important reference on Totonac. Their last works were a Totonac - Spanish glossary in 1983, and a paper on the relative clause in 1984. In the literature, it is argued that MIL typologies often map onto the earlier locations of Bible translators (Terborg, García Landa, & Moore, 2007): Zapotitlán Totonac has long been recognised as a distinct language by all typologies. See also Swadesh (1970). As Mackay (1999) notes, later researchers on MIL sought conceptual distance from Sapir -Whorf theory, linguistic determinism, linguistic relativity, linguistic macro-families, and by association, researchers of this era, including SIL. Interestingly, at the end of his career Swadesh transferred to the University of Alberta, Canada, (McQuown, 1968), from where, four decades later, David Beck's 2011 theory emerged of a macro-linguistic family called Totozoquean, which challenges the hitherto isolate status of Totonac.



conceptualisations of contemporary Totonac culture.<sup>58</sup> The initial focus on Totonac *voladores* or flying dancers broadened out to exploration of political and economic change and continuity.<sup>59</sup>

Reflecting on the same political events U.S. anthropologist William D. Smith (2004) focuses more on the implications of an increasing insertion of the state and global markets into MIL subsistence contexts, such as Huehuetla/Kgoyom, and themes of Totonac cultural and political autonomy as a function of agricultural subsistence. These latter themes interconnect with the work of Dutch anthropologist Cora Govers and Mexican evolutionary psychologist Ramón Patiño. Govers' (2006) study of a Totonac community culturally and geographically close to Huehuetla/Kgoyom analyses culture in terms of social network ties and bonds of mutual obligations within and beyond the geographical limits of the community.<sup>60</sup> Patiño's (2008) large-scale study of partner selection in Huehuetla/Kgoyom also analyses cultural norms of reciprocity, community service and cooperation in terms of socially evolved behaviours that underpin successful subsistence.

Meanwhile, a new generation of North American linguists of Totonac has emerged, and in 2007, the First International Conference on Totonac – Tepehua Languages was hosted by the University of Alberta, Canada (UA).<sup>61</sup> The conference was both testament to and impetus for the upturn in research interest in Totonac. One of the conference outcomes represents another major development – closer collaboration between the University of Toronto, the Language Documentation Research Cluster (henceforth LDRC) at UA, and key Mexican institutions. These latter include government agencies such as INALI, HE institutions such as UNAM and

---

<sup>58</sup> Troiani's 2007 text is a revision of the original published in French in 2004; MacKay (2012) describes the study as concerning South-Central Totonac; Troiani had located it within Coyutla Totonac; Brown, Beck et al (2011) subsequently refer to it as 'Huehuetla Totonac'.

<sup>59</sup> The same duality of focus is true in cinematic work by US director Bruce 'Pacho' Lane, who documented cultural life in Huehuetla/Kgoyom (see 'The Tree of Life' (1978), and 'The Tree of Knowledge' (1983), reviewed by Logan, (1984), and 'The Warriors of the Sun: the rebirth of the 'voladores' ritual', released in 2006) as well as local political mobilisations of the 1980s and 1990s, seen in the 1999 film *Democracia indígena*.

<sup>60</sup> Research was based in Nanacatlán in the sierra poblana.

<sup>61</sup> Researchers such as Paulette Levy (based at UNAM), James K Watters, and notably Carolyn J. Mackay (a former student of McQuown), whose 1999 'A Grammar of Misanla Totonac' includes a bibliography of all known linguistic works on Totonac and informs this study. McKay's research was published by the University of Utah in the series 'Studies in Indigenous Languages of the Americas' and acknowledges an earlier Totonac bibliography by Contreras García in 1985.



importantly, the new intercultural universities. Such collaboration no doubt fortifies the LDRC's projects to document highly endangered and moribund varieties of Totonac, such as Upper Necaxa Totonac.<sup>62</sup>

In cooperation with historic partners such as SIL, a key research objective has been to revise and refine Totonac language typologies (Beck 2003; Beck & Mel'čuk 2011). Indeed, a major recent development concerns Totonac's status as a language isolate: in 2011, Brown, Beck et al revived an earlier claim that connects Totonac to the Mixe-Zoque family.<sup>63</sup> At the time of writing, the position of INALI and SIL on Beck's proposal is not clearly established, and the question remains unsettled but widely cited.<sup>64</sup> In addition, such cooperation has led to the publication of the first Pan-Totonac anthology of annotated Totonac-Tepehua texts, and a comprehensive bibliography of Totonac linguistics, which was edited in 2012 by Paulette Levy of UNAM and David Beck of UA.<sup>65</sup>

Finally, arguably the most important development has been the hosting of the first International Research Conference on Totonac language and culture within the *Totonacapan*, hosted in 2014 by the UIEP or Intercultural University of Puebla State, located within the boundaries of Huehuetla/Kgoyom.<sup>66</sup> There is significance in the ideological shift (or political will) which has occurred to secure the necessary transfer of capital and capacity (economic, political, and academic) and enable agents in the *Totonacapan* to host such research endeavour. At the same time, there is symbolic and instructive value in international researchers travelling to the *Totonacapan*, rather than Totonac linguists soliciting funds to travel to North America. These issues are important in communicating changed discourses of MIL and perspectives on agency, and carry implications for the social and academic valorisation of Totonac-speaking researchers.

---

<sup>62</sup> The classification is used by UNESCO and the LDRC (2007) at the University of Alberta, developing work originally conducted by Levy in the region.

<sup>63</sup> See Anaya (1987) who draws on earlier claims by Wonderly (1942) and Jiménez (1942)

<sup>64</sup> The EL literature also cautions against constructing narratives of the past and speculative language taxonomies that conflate both, especially in relation to Mesoamerica. See (Faudree, 2014)

<sup>65</sup> The anthology *Las lenguas totonacas y tepehuas: textos y otros materiales para su estudio* includes a sample text from San Juan Ozelonacaxtla in the Huehuetla/Kgoyom municipality, edited by Rachel McGraw, PhD student of Yvonne Lam of the University of Alberta.

<sup>66</sup> See news item at [http://pueblanoticias.com.mx/noticia/puebla-sede-del-primer-congreso-internacional-de-la-cultura-totonaca-57782/?fb\\_comment\\_id=688399457908253\\_688822677865931#f3e65a1ceeab204](http://pueblanoticias.com.mx/noticia/puebla-sede-del-primer-congreso-internacional-de-la-cultura-totonaca-57782/?fb_comment_id=688399457908253_688822677865931#f3e65a1ceeab204)

Indeed, with the political will of the Mexican state and UIEP leadership, the UIEP offers unprecedented new potential for the emergence of a generation of Totonac intellectuals educated and trained entirely within the Totonacapan, and for quantitative and qualitative growth in research output of Totonac culture; the UIEP is already supervising undergraduate and masters' dissertations by local biculturals, creating an inventory of pertinent research, and will imminently be commissioning doctoral research.<sup>67</sup> The prospect of a growth of research output from, and more importantly by, the under-researched linguistic community augurs well, with the caveat that it should include, but not be limited to, themes of Totonac language.

### **Popular discourses of MIL and absence of Totonac**

With these opportunities in mind, literature on MIL should also be considered not only in terms of the academic community, but also its role in the formation of popular discourses and in shaping the ideological context in which MIL cultures are positively valorised or minoritised. In the late twentieth century, it was common for newspapers and periodicals to educate the public on MIL heritage and diversity. For example, *México Desconocido* (unknown or hidden Mexico) was a popular monthly publication in the 1980s, and in August 1985 produced a special bulletin on the Totonac *voladores* or flying dancers of Cuetzálan (Croda Leon, 2005:49). The national newspaper *El Nacional* issued a series of pamphlets on 'our' culture, including a supplement on indigenous languages in 1990 called *Nuestra Palabra* or 'our word' (Croda León, 2005), and in 1994 the Mexican government published a series of booklets called 'Languages of Mexico' (reprinted 2002), which were parallel texts with transcriptions of oral literature in MIL.<sup>68</sup> The Totonac edition (no.5, 'Totonac Stories') acknowledges the storytellers, translators/transcribers, and their institutions, and reports that Totonac is spoken in the northern highlands of Puebla, Hidalgo and lowland Veracruz; however, it does not situate each story

<sup>67</sup> In 2011/12 through 2013/14, the UIEP library archived at least 65 undergraduate and postgraduate theses on research with a nexus to immediately surrounding communities. These projects cover a range of cultural, linguistic, and educational topics in agricultural, social and physical sciences, and cross-disciplinary studies, with over 80% supervised directly by the UIEP. Personal communication.

<sup>68</sup> This was part of a 20-year project of CONACULTA, the National Commission for Culture, in conjunction with the (then) Directorate of Indigenous Culture (DGCPI) & Ministry of Education (SEP) to transcribe the country's oral literature in indigenous languages.

within a specific community or identify which Totonac language or dialect is being used, and this imprecision reoccurs in popular texts on MIL.<sup>69</sup>

Meanwhile, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the MIL revitalisation agenda, Mexico is adding rapidly to its museums, exhibitions and texts which disseminate ‘their’ patrimony, and raise the profile of MIL diversity (Kollewe, 2005). In the state-sponsored museums of the provincial capital of Puebla, with its range of pre-Columbian artefacts, only as recently as 2014 have Totonac cultural products (such as forms of dress), which are in current use and not related to *voladores*, come onto display. Meanwhile, in Huehuetla/Kgoyom in the same year, bronze statues were erected in the main square, portraying the image of a man and woman each in traditional dress (to an audience already dressed in this form, as well as in western or mestizo styles).

The still limited range of linguistic texts on MIL are more often found under ‘anthropology’, or ‘history’ than ‘modern languages’ in commercial bookstores. MIL texts multiply in national and provincial museums, but pre-Hispanic themes predominate, or contemporary themes within a narrower range, such as forms of dress, legends, dance and religious ritual, (especially the Totonac ritual dance of the *voladores*).<sup>70</sup> This raises the issue of the conceptual field with which a polity is associated and what this communicates about its relevance and value. For example, in other post-independence contexts indigenous polities have challenged public discourses that denote their cultural production as forms of craft, but not art, or as folk wisdom but not knowledge; or as mythology but not literature.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> The editors come from institutions in Papantla and Xalapa in the state of Veracruz, which implies coastal rather than highland varieties of Totonac but this is not specified.

<sup>70</sup> Croda Leon’s 2005 anthology of first person texts on Totonac dance forms does in fact communicate how Totonac culture maintains a diverse repertoire aside from ‘flying’; the origins of many (such as la danza de los negros) lie in the colonial period and intercultural contact, and are more recent and syncretic in character. The danza del volador is an impressive artistic ritual of religious character in which dancers or voladores (lit. ‘those who fly’) climb up a vertiginously high, thin, tree trunk that is topped with a revolving platform; from this, they appear to launch themselves into the sky, whilst playing flutes and drums. Dancers are attached to the platform by ropes wound around their waists, so that as the platform revolves, so the ropes unwind and the voladores appear to fly down in circles until eventually reaching the ground. The danza del volador was the first Mexican cultural product, after día de muertos (Day of the Dead), to be registered as World Intangible Heritage by UNESCO. The argument here is not to detract from its rightfully iconic status as cultural patrimony, but to assert that a single cultural product or expression is not definitive or summative of the polity.

<sup>71</sup> For example, indigenous polities in other post-independence contexts, have protested that their cultural production is conceptualised as artisanship, rather than art; see AIATSIS, 2015).

For this reason, the conceptual and physical location of texts, on or in MIL, is of concern. If MIL are always distanced from modern languages, this arguably communicates a deficit in their vitality or participation in national linguistic culture. The collocation of texts on MIL cultures alongside historical artefacts within museums further reinforces their correlation with the historical past or fossilised present and diminishes their perceived coevalness.

Further, the intersectionality of these trends with a restricted range of themes precludes MIL text (and MIL authors) from myriad contemporary themes that frame the everyday experience of young MIL speakers, from accessing creative channels, and from the transmission of more accurate and comprehensive knowledge of MIL cultures. In this respect, the authorship and ownership of representations of linguistic culture (textual, visual, artefactual) is significant: a linguistic culture should be able to direct and curate self-representations, rather than have these formulated only as state-directed discourses. Ironically, this implies a commitment on the part of the nation-state to ‘concede’ contingent economic, political and artistic autonomy, (as seen on a small-scale in the emergence of community-led museums in Oaxaca; see Kollwe, 2005; Hoobler, 2006).

Moreover, cultural life is bound up with processes of continuity and change and should be portrayed as such. Ironically, what is often regarded as typical or traditional MIL culture (both from outside and within) is often more recent and syncretic in character.<sup>72</sup> When notions of what constitutes a culture are too narrowly defined by others outside it, or too focussed on externalities, then creativity and adaptation, especially among the young, can be misunderstood or overlooked. For example, many young Totonac biculturals live lifestyles that embrace migration, technology, and the increasing insertion of national culture into their lives. Old assumptions regarding the trajectory of their lives and lifestyles need to be reimagined (García Martínez, 2014) as young people engage in evolving relationships with each aspect of local and national culture.

---

<sup>72</sup> For example, when watching and reading about Totonac dance forms such as *la danza de los negros* (see Croda Leon, 2005), or listening to Huastec musical groups in Huhuetla/Kgoyom; origins clearly lie in the colonial period and intercultural contact; nonetheless, such hybrid modern-day expressions are important cultural patrimony and identifiers.

That said, it also appears to be the case that even after lengthy periods of urban resettlement, rural migrants from MIL communities preserve fundamental traditions, beliefs, social networks and forms of association, to the extent that they can be regarded as only ‘externally Hispanicised’ (1964:34), and by implication, remain ‘internally’ indigenous.<sup>73</sup> This argument is interesting to juxtapose with Bartolomé’s (2006) more pessimistic notion of ‘ethnic transit’ which was discussed in Chapter 2.1. His concept of a more complete and Eurocentric form of linguistic, cultural and economic acculturation appeared almost inevitable, whilst others (such as Krickeberg, 1964) conceptualise an adaptive cultural persona, which appears more syncretic and more informed by MIL cultural heritage.<sup>74</sup>

In this respect, the aforementioned work of Govers (2006) in a community that is culturally and geographically close to the field location of this doctoral study, is particularly interesting: she traces how urban migration does not inevitably or irretrievably sever Totonac social network ties and cultural relationships of mutual obligations; rather networks are adapted accordingly and new networks of urban social actors interconnect with the rural network, allowing both to function to the advantage of each; these considerations are important when discussing (in Chapter 5) the strategies available to biculturals for maintaining MIL-use, and the actual (rather than assumed) opportunities and threats posed by rural-urban migration.

---

<sup>73</sup> These studies were conducted in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by US sociolinguist John Redfield and cited by Krickeberg when he first published in German in 1956 and later in Spanish in 1964; Krickeberg had originally completed a PhD thesis ‘Die Totonaken’ in 1914 in German, published in 1925 as a book, and republished by the Museo Nacional de Mexico in Spanish in 1933 (Valderrama Rouy, 2005:187). In his 1956 text he claims the integrity of Totonac traditions are still firmly maintained, draws parallels with Redfield’s work and claims that Totonacs in urban areas are only ‘externally Hispanicised’, maintaining cultural practices, forms of association, constitution, and religious notions (with or without Christian observance) which can be traced back even to pre-Aztec times (Krickeberg 1964). In their own rural communities, material culture has been maintained over the centuries. Many recognisable pre-Hispanic elements (such as crops, foodstuffs, agricultural practices) survive to the present. By marrying anthropological and archaeological studies with sociolinguistic research among descendants of Aztecs, Krickeberg claims that in the northern sierra poblana, all the important elements of pre-Hispanic material culture remain largely intact, except for iron tools, domestic animals, and men’s clothing (Krickeberg 1964: 34).

<sup>74</sup> Bartolomé’s concept emerged during a period of rapid industrial and urban transformation in Mexico, accompanied by political militancy around *indigenismo*, which may explain its modelling of broader and more profound cultural transformation at the individual and collective level.

## Totonac languages today

Totonac-Tepehua languages are spoken today by approximately 250,000 people (ranking eighth nationally for MIL population size), concentrated in western central Mexico bordering the Gulf Coast. The Tepehua branch appears in the state of Hidalgo; the Totonac branch features in highland and coastal Veracruz, and inland in the state of Puebla, distributed across 19 municipalities of the north-eastern highlands; Totonac is Puebla's second most widely spoken MIL after Náhuatl, numbering approximately 120,000 speakers.<sup>75</sup>

**Figure 2.4 shows a proposed typology of Totonac-Tepehua languages using Beck's 2003 model and 2011 revisions.<sup>76</sup>**

Proto-Totonac				Proto-Tepehua
<b>Sierra Totonac<sup>77</sup> languages (since 2003)</b>  4. Zapotitlán 5. Coatepec 6. Coyutla 7. <u>Huehuetla Totonac</u> (since 2011)*  * I term this 'KT' (Kgoyom Totonac) in the thesis	<b>Misantla Totonac</b>	<b>Papantla Totonac</b>	<b>Northern Totonac languages</b>  1. Apapantilla 2. Zihuateutla 3. Upper Necaxa <sup>78</sup>	Tlachichilco Pisa Flores Huehuetla <sup>79</sup>

As Figure 2.4 (above) shows, at least seven distinct Totonac languages are now recognised, the 'latest' being the speech variety of Huehuetla/Kgoyom.<sup>80</sup> Beck

<sup>75</sup> In Figure 2.4, numbers indicate chronological classification of individual Totonac languages. Totonac family is coded ISO 639-3 by UNESCO. Tepehua branch is not to be confused with Tepehuán, a MIL of north-eastern Mexico belonging to the same linguistic family as Náhuatl.

<sup>76</sup> Data adapted from Beck (2003) and Brown & Beck et al (2011).

<sup>77</sup> INALI also adopts 'Sierra Totonac', coded 'tos' or Highland Totonac by SIL in Ethnologue

<sup>78</sup> Upper Necaxa Totonac is highly endangered and object of ongoing research (Lam, 2009).

<sup>79</sup> 'Huehuetla Tepehua' refers to a town with the same name (but different language) in the state of Hidalgo, and not the Huehuetla of this study (it is a common place name in the region).

<sup>80</sup> SIL identifies nine languages (Lewis, 2009) but the Mexican census models used by INEGI (2010) lists seven language groups (according to territorial areas) for which eleven auto-denominations have been recorded: 1. 'totonaco del sureste', 2. 'totonaco central del norte', 3. 'totonaco del cerro Xinolatépetl', 4. 'totonaco central alto', 5. 'totonaco de la costa', 6. 'totonaco del río Necaxa', 7. 'totonaco central del sur'. Beck's (2011) 'Huehuetla Totonac', which, I call 'Kgoyom Totonac' or KT, would be situated in this latter category. An advantage of INEGI's territorial divisions is that all towns

(2003) had arranged four main language divisions based on earlier studies (Sierra, Misantla, Papantla, Northern.) stating that ‘differences among languages *within* [italics mine] these four divisions, particularly Sierra and Northern, may in some cases be great enough to prevent naïve mutual intelligibility’ (Beck, 2003:5).<sup>81</sup> The language of Huehuetla/Kgoyom correlates with three auto-denominations recorded in the 2010 census, namely *Tutunáku*, *Tutunakú*, and *Totonáco*.<sup>82</sup> All three combine the concept of speaker, community and language into a single lexical item, are in common use, and raise at least two points of interest regarding local ideologies of language and identity.

First, the stress placed on the penultimate syllable (in *Tutunáku*) follows rules of Spanish pronunciation, whereas the stress on the final vowel (in *Tutunakú*) is more often associated with foreign loan words. Meanwhile, both versions employ the consonant ‘k’ (unlike *Totonaco*), which is also associated with loanwords.

Second, it might be argued that all these terms function primarily as identifiers of the culture in relationship to others or non-members. This is because, in intra-group discourse among informants, a term which interlocutors use to refer to shared language and fellow speakers is *tachuwín* (/tatʃuwi:n/).<sup>83</sup> In other words, lexical variations on Totonac are more connotative of collective, contrastive identities, while *tachuwín* denotes intra-group membership. This generic term is used by speakers of distinct varieties of Totonac (as seen in the 2010 census); therefore, for the purposes of this study only, I have transposed it to Kgoyom Totonac or KT (using the Totonac language name for Huehuetla), simply to indicate the speech variety used by

---

and outlying communities that it deems belong to a particular Totonac language variety are explicitly named. Duna Troiani’s 2007 analysis refers to Totonac spoken in the municipality of Huehuetla. Troiani at the time denominated it as Coyutla Totonac; SIL placed it within ‘Highland Totonac’ in Ethnologue; MacKay (2012) related it to South-Central Totonac; Brown, Beck et al (2011) refer to it as Huehuetla Totonac. The important point is that Troiani’s linguistic samples come from one of the 13 rural boroughs (Chilococho) within Huehuetla/Kgoyom. Informants to my study report several mutually intelligible but quite distinct dialects in this large municipality, so some caveat is required when accepting the characterisation ‘Huehuetla Totonac.’ A by-product of the quid-pro-quo of this doctoral study (see Chapter 3) is a trilingual parallel text and sound recording in Totonac/English/Spanish for a children’s talking storybook, which also serves as a sample for linguistic analysis.

<sup>81</sup> Mackay (1999:16 – 17) had listed 4 Totonac varieties: Papantla; Misantla; North-Central; South Central; in 2010, when this doctoral study commenced, INALI and SIL had not unequivocally defined Sierra Totonac; however, Beck (2003; 2011) had denominated Sierra Totonac as a language group by placing it above a number of distinct, non-mutually intelligible languages

<sup>82</sup> accents are shown here only to denote spoken syllable stress.

<sup>83</sup> It can also be heard pluralised using Spanish grammar (i.e. ‘tachuwines’). Chenaut (1996) also noted use of the term *tachuwines* and *Kgoyomes*.



informants, without any assumptions regarding its accepted nomenclature or taxonomic classification.

During the lifetime of this doctoral study, debate on Totonac has largely centred on its linguistic identity and two key issues: first, whether Totonac-Tepehua is one of the world's few genuine language isolates (Campbell & Mithun, 1979; Lastra, 1992; Herrera Zendejas, 2009) or is related to Mayan (Anaya, 1987) and Mixe-Zoquean language families (Brown & Beck et al, 2011); and second, how many Totonac languages 'exist'. Current theoretical modelling of linguistic boundaries around Totonac are as contested as the boundaries within it (such as denoting language or dialect), and in practice, as research continues, so the number of Totonac languages and dialects officially 'increase'. It is likely that the number of Totonac languages will continue to grow, and 'new' dialects emerge as agents compete to claim intellectual property of such typologies. At the same time, while there is urgency to name and classify speech forms in active use, there is also anxiety to memorialise endangered languages in processes of fatal decline.

To summarise the three key points of the arguments above, there is a patchwork history of research on Totonac, with a skewed focus towards typologies, which has left gaps in knowledge of contemporary cultures. Discussion of this deficit intersects with a theme pursued further in Chapter 5: the implications of greater participation of local young biculturals and MIL-speaking informants in language research and policy, and greater transfer of decision-making and research or policy resources towards the *Totonacapan*. The rationale concerns not only socially equitable, ethical practice, but an enhancement in academic integrity and the expansion and refinement of knowledge, by building local research capacity and distributing power back towards experiential experts who are the objects of language policy and research and should also be their subjects.

Linguistic research (and under-researched languages) must necessarily be placed within socio-historic context. Terms such as 'language' and 'dialect' are not neutral linguistic concepts, but ideologically constructed, sensitive to instrumentalisation in discourses of national or cultural identity, and highly symbolic in this post-independence context where indigenous and colonial speech forms are juxtaposed,



and power and resources distributed asymmetrically across social and linguistic identities.

If prior inattention to Totonac language is symptomatic of a historic devalorisation of both the language and persona of the modern-day speaker, then the recent upsurge of interest might suggest that a meaningful process of ideological revalorisation is occurring. The measure, according to the argument of this thesis, is the valorisation afforded to not only the language or other cultural products, both the embodied speaker and the communities of speakers with whom they connect.<sup>84</sup>

Meanwhile, as far as the young bicultural informants to this study are concerned, their current and future language use, social identities, academic choices and imminent life plans, are framed not only by the colonial legacies and nation-building processes which have been described in chapter 2.1, and by the discourses of MIL and Totonac which have been explored in this latter section, but by a much more intimately experienced local social context, as the next section will explore.

---

<sup>84</sup> In other Totonac communities in the sierra poblana, such as Chicontla and Patla, the interplay between ideologies and socio-economic changes since the 1980s is resulting in language shift from Totonac to Spanish, such that new generations have Spanish as a ‘first’ language, according to Lam (2009). She argues that negative evaluation of Totonac combines with the recent availability of Spanish-medium education, enabling new parents to teach Spanish at home, not realizing the collective impact on language decline.

### **2.3 Local social and linguistic characteristics: Puebla & Huehuetla/Kgoyom**

This final section of the chapter has a dual function: on the one hand it provides more detailed social and linguistic contextualisation to this research; on the other hand, it constitutes a part of the research findings, insofar as it analyses data which prove pertinent to understanding the formation and expression of ideologies and policies of MIL in the local and wider environment. For example, it connects local phenomena to theory on language valorisation and vitality (discussed in Chapter 1), by approaching issues of multilingualism, remoteness, population density, notions of identity, and socio-economic activity. Moreover, specific contextual issues are addressed which, the thesis argues, should remain at the forefront of any analysis of sociolinguistic context: namely, asymmetries of power and pluralities of violence in the lives of embodied speakers.

This predominantly Totonac-speaking rural municipality and market town, characterised by subsistence farming and small-scale coffee production, has a Náhuatl name, Huehuetla, meaning ancient place or community, and it is believed to have been settled almost a millennium before Aztec rule in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>85</sup> As with many toponyms in central Mexico, it was superimposed by Aztec elites and assimilated into Spanish by the colonial and later independent Mexican state. In local Totonac, the place name is Kgoyom, which means a gathering or assembly of parrots. Totonac speakers routinely use this term intra-group, but only in recent years has Kgoyom emerged in public, intercultural discourse. For example, in 2010, no identifier existed at the entrance to the town. The first printed sign in Spanish appeared in 2013 (as the state began to promote rural tourism) and a hand-painted translation was subsequently added. By 2014, fully bilingual printed signs had been erected.<sup>86</sup>

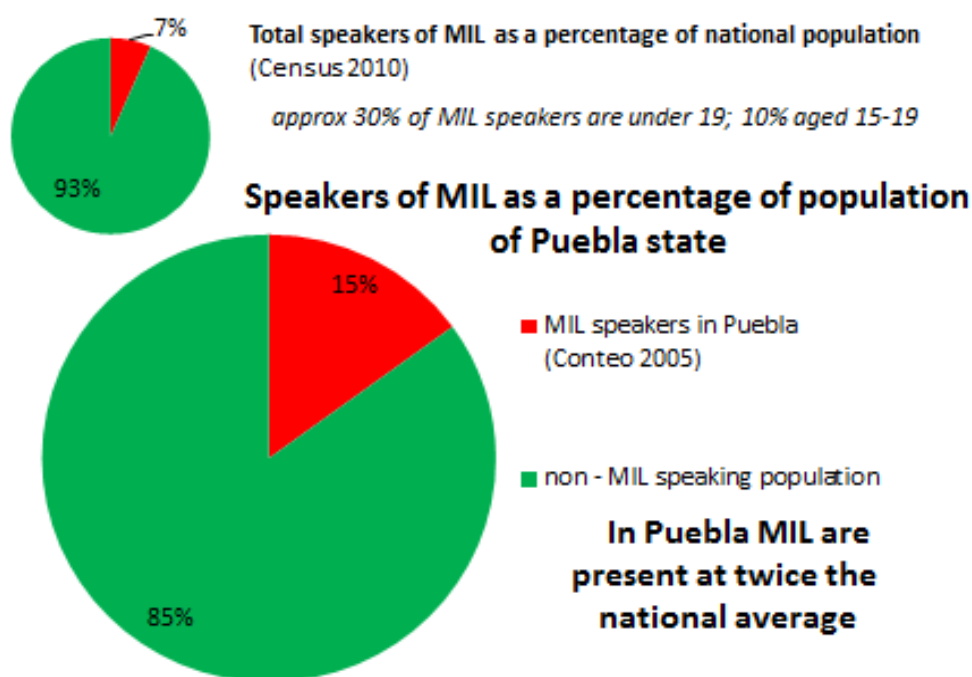
---

<sup>85</sup> Huehuetla comprises a rural market town of the same name, which is the political and administrative centre, a semi-urban neighbourhood (Huehuetla Barrio Alto) and 11 outlying rural hamlets or dependent communities: Cinco de Mayo, Chilocoyo del Carmen, Chilocoyo Guadalupe, Francisco I. Madero, Kuwik Chuchut, Leacaman, Lipuntahuaca, Ozelonacaxtla, Putaxcat, Putlunichuchut (Vista Hermosa), Xonalpu.

<sup>86</sup> Reclaiming the name of Kgoyom might appear marginal, but reflects a wider mood of identity revitalisation on the one hand, and the instrumentalisation of indigeneity in rural tourism on the other; see Babb, 2012 and Canessa, 2012 on this debate.

In terms of MIL maintenance and diversity, a key fact highlighted in the figure below (Figure 2.5) is that in the state of Puebla, the percentage of MIL speakers is more than twice the national average, making it an important area for the study of MIL and endangered language research generally. More than 600,000 people or 13-15% speak MIL, compared to 7-9% nationally (INEGI, 2011b), placing Puebla in fourth position nationally for MIL maintenance.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the Puebla municipality of Huehuetla/Kgoyom, where this study is based, is of exceptional interest since the relative presence of MIL and Spanish is almost entirely the reverse of the national picture: almost 90% speak a MIL (predominantly Totonac) in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, whereas nationally, more than 90% do not (INEGI, 2011b).<sup>88</sup>

**Figure 2.5 shows speakers of MIL as a percentage of the Mexican population<sup>89</sup>**



With regards to linguistic identities in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, 96% identify as Totonac, 1% as Náhuatl or Otomí, and only the remaining 3% as mestizo (INEGI 2011a). In

<sup>87</sup> The 2010 census distinguishes between understanding and speaking, so that this figure may underestimate the presence of MIL in people's linguistic repertoires.

<sup>88</sup> 88% 'speak' a MIL but see caveat above; 30% are monolingual speakers, a classification also requiring caveat; nationally, approximately 93% of Mexicans do not speak a MIL (INEGI 2011b).

<sup>89</sup> 2010 census (INEGI 2011c) MIL speakers aged 3 and over = 6,913,362 of 112,336,538 population.

terms of language use, approximately 88% speak Totonac,<sup>90</sup> meaning that at least 8% self-identify as Totonac, even if they do not speak the language. This willingness to identify with a MIL culture will be returned to shortly in discussion of the community's social outlook. Additionally, almost 30% of Totonac speakers in Huehuetla/Kgoyom are monolingual, a figure twice the national average and three times the Puebla average.<sup>91</sup> Most informants to this study have at least one Totonac monolingual parent or grandparent.

Meanwhile, in terms of the diversity of MIL, a number of language varieties and dialects from at least seven MIL linguistic families are spoken in Puebla state, including Chocho–Popolaca languages, Mazateco, Mixteca, Otomí and Náhuatl.<sup>92</sup> The latter predominates, accounting for more than 72% of MIL speakers in Puebla, although most Náhuatl speakers are distributed in other provinces across the republic.<sup>93</sup> Next, in terms of numbers of Totonac speakers, there are more than 100,000 in Puebla state, or just under 20% of the local MIL population, meaning up to half the country's Totonac speakers reside in Puebla.<sup>94</sup>

In many provinces within Puebla, possibly up to a quarter of the total, (INEGI, 2004) several MIL co-exist. This MIL diversity and co-existence in Puebla, along with the aforementioned predominance of MIL in local communities such as Huehuetla/Kgoyom, warrants its own dedicated research in order to better understand the conditions for language vitality and survival. In the meantime, this survival of MIL alongside one another and the vitality of Totonac in localised contexts are themes which are revisited in subsequent discussion of this study's findings. The map of Puebla in Figure 2.6 (below) shows principal Totonac-speaking areas (coloured brown) in the north east, the location for this doctoral study: it can be seen that it is adjacent to Otomí (pink) and surrounded by Náhuatl-speaking communities

<sup>90</sup> 88% of the population aged over 5 years in Huehuetla/Kgoyom speaks Totonac (INEGI 2011a:163).

<sup>91</sup> 2010 census (INEGI 2011c) almost 15% of MIL speakers aged over 5 do not speak Spanish; in the state of Puebla, (INEGI 2011a) 10% do not, rising to 30% in this study's fieldwork location

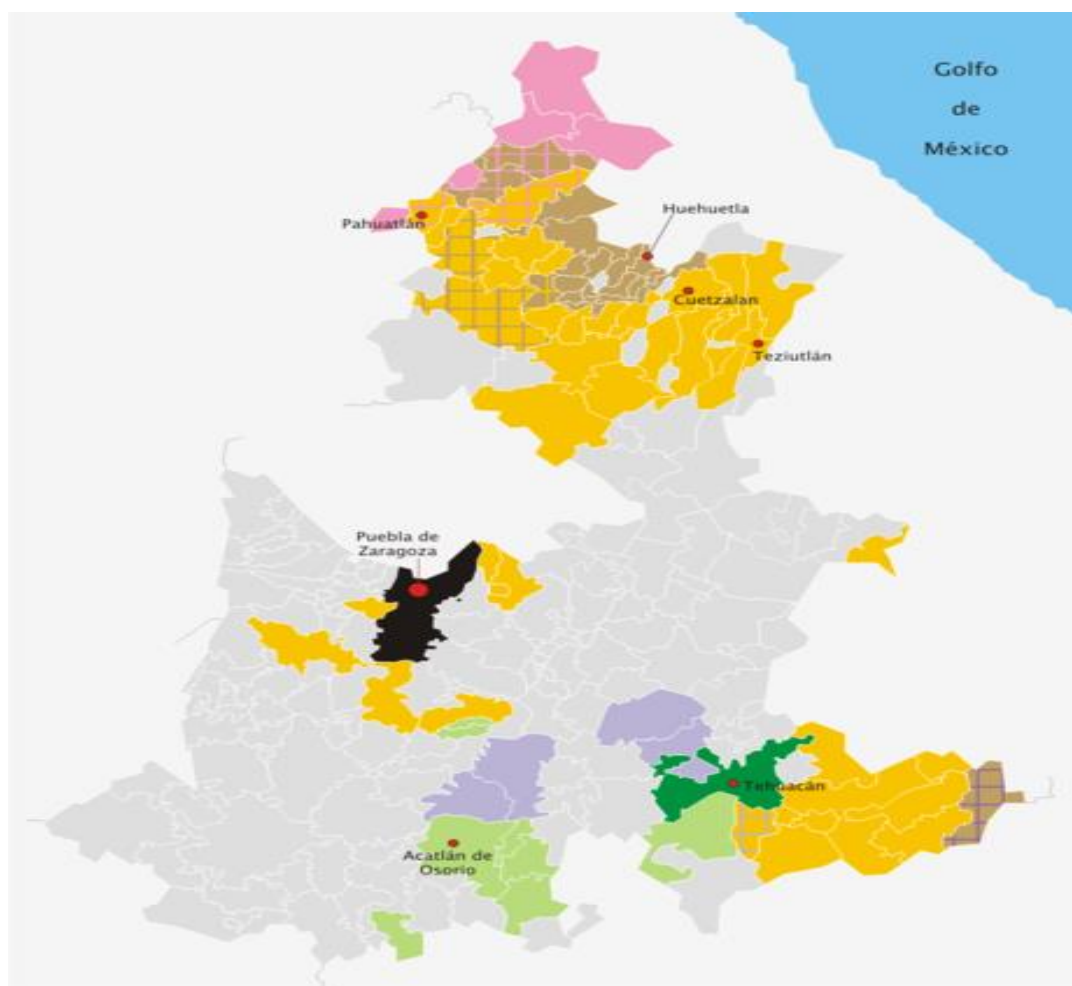
<sup>92</sup> The number of languages varies according to typologies and data gathering methods but consensus exists that at least seven language families are present (six identified, plus others undetermined (INEGI, 2004; 2011b).

<sup>93</sup> 28% of Náhuatl speakers are located in Puebla; Náhuatl-derived place names appear prominent but Puebla is plurilingual and loss of MIL diversity is relatively recent.

<sup>94</sup> According to INEGI 2004 there were 240,000 speakers of Totonac in Mexico, 42% of these whom in the state of Puebla, approximately 106,480; the latest census (INEGI 2011b) puts the figure close to 120,000, i.e. 50%

(in yellow); to the east (yellow and brown gridlines) both these language communities co-exist.

**Figure 2.6 shows MIL diversity in the state of Puebla.**<sup>95</sup>



Brown = Totonac languages	Light Green = Mixtec languages
Pink = Otomí languages	Light blue = Chocho-Popolaca languages
Yellow = Náhuatl languages	Others = mixed MIL, including Mazatec

The age of the MIL speaking population in Puebla and in the fieldwork location is younger than the national average. Across the republic, approximately a third of MIL speakers are under 19 years old, according to the last census, and 10% of these are aged 15-19, figures which are of key interest in terms of language vitality. A

<sup>95</sup> Visual adapted from INEGI, 2004 based on 2000 census.

language community which is top-heavy with elderly speakers is indicative of historic decline, since inter-generational transmission is being lost, and the language is increasingly endangered. As the population ages, so the language must inevitably disappear, in the absence of conscious, planned, and effective interventions for its revitalisation (Fishman, 1991). These figures suggest that local contexts exist where intergenerational transmission of MIL is continuing. Indeed, the size of the MIL-speaking population nationally is growing, even if loss of diversity is occurring: this growth is said to be largely attributable to improved primary healthcare, nutrition and sanitation in MIL-predominant communities (INEGI, 2004). Nevertheless, growth rates are still lower than among the population as a whole, a cause of concern.<sup>96</sup>

Highly detailed local data (rather than national or averages and provincial aggregates) is required for research more specifically focussed on analysis of language vitality, since a young and vibrant MIL population in one language community (e.g. Kgoym Totonac) does not compensate for an aging community of speakers in another (e.g. Upper Necaxa Totonac). That said, it is interesting to note in broad terms for the purposes of this doctoral study, that in both the state of Puebla and Huehuetla/ Kgoym the MIL-speaking population is young: approximately half is under 24 years old, and this study primarily gathers data from local MIL speakers aged 16-25. As key life and language choices are beginning to impinge, and adult identities, partnerships and parenthood come into view, so they represent a key generation of commentators and theorists of language ideologies and policies in the environment, and analysts of language management in the lives of young MIL speakers, as this study will indicate.

Regarding population density, the municipality covers approximately 60 km<sup>2</sup> (Municipio de Huehuetla, 2008) with a population of just under 16,000 in 2010 (INEGI, 2011c).<sup>97</sup> However, local census data reveals that almost 90% of the population is dispersed among eleven much smaller communities. Most comprise a

---

<sup>96</sup> In the last decade of the 20th century, annual growth of 1.18% of the MIL-speaking populations was recorded in Puebla, compared to 1.37 overall, and 1.87 nationally, compared to 1.99 overall.

<sup>97</sup> Population total: 15, 689. (INEGI, 2011a: 163).





with 2,500 to 15,000 inhabitants) compared to the general population.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, the relative percentage of MIL speakers in very small population centres (under 2,500) is very high - more than two-thirds (63.9%) are located in very small communities, and more than half of the MIL-speaking populations in such communities are children aged under five.<sup>100</sup>

As discussed in Chapter 1, both the IEV and GIDS models of language vitality (Landweer, 2012 and Fishman, 1991; 2001 respectively) indicate that population distribution and density have a determinant relationship to language maintenance, in terms of a community's capacity on the one hand, and its linguistic boundaries on the other. This means that enough local capacity exists (enough people and demographic diversity) for sustaining intergenerational interaction with others and the formation of affective bonds with persons in networks of shared linguistic and cultural identity. It also means that the linguistic culture is sufficiently cushioned, in physical, economic or cultural terms, from an erosion of its identity caused by unavoidable interaction with a more dominant, competitor language (and, crucially, asymmetric relations of power between the cultures) which can leave speakers of the non-dominant language highly susceptible to (or desirous) of linguistic and cultural assimilation.

Therefore, as discussed in Chapter 1, it is relevant to consider social and linguistic processes of minoritisation which function as management of language and are expressed in language ideologies, discourses and policies. Such management positions Totonac and MIL cultures relative to (constructed) Spanish-speaking national culture, shaping the access of each to public goods and services and the social distribution of power. The extent to which a MIL culture, such as Totonac in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, may be isolated from the competitor language of Spanish by its topographical remoteness or infrastructural inaccessibility, are highly important considerations, but not entirely determinant.

---

<sup>99</sup> 23.9% in centres with 2.5k to 15k; compared to 5% in larger centres with 15-100k and 7.2% in very large centres over 100k; (INEGI, 2004).

<sup>100</sup> MIL speakers under five years are 63.9%, compared to 31.1% over five; INEGI 2004.



As crucial, if not more so, are issues of language valorisation, stemming from the nature of power relations between language communities. As discussed in Chapter 1 in relation to Landweer's research (2012) in Papua New Guinea, some small language communities can co-exist in close proximity for centuries. In this area of Puebla, Náhuatl, Totonac and other MIL have co-existed, whilst Spanish competes and threatens. In other communities in the sierra poblana socio-economic change (since the 1980s) has seen the increasing insertion of Spanish into daily life (Lam, 2009).<sup>101</sup> Combined with Spanish-medium education, this enables new parents to speak Spanish at home, not realizing the collective impact on language decline, so that subsequent generations use Spanish as a 'first' language. However, crucial in this process is the negative evaluation of Totonac experienced by such parents (Lam, 2009), so that language choices and shift occur at the interplay of ideologies and policies experienced in the environment. Where negative valorisation is either less present or more consciously resisted, it is more likely that Totonac can be sustained through patterns of bilingualism.

In this respect, the efficacy and security of economic enterprise within a language community, and the cultural products and processes it engenders or which undergirds it, become highly pertinent. In Huehuetla/Kgoyom and its historic situation of intense rurality and subsistence agriculture, these include Totonac cultural traditions for ensuring access to land and life-sustaining resources (as in Patiño, 2008), Totonac principles and patterns of reciprocity, including the distribution of food (see Govers, 2005), the bonding and revitalising impact of Totonac engagement in cultural forms such as dance (Croda León, 2005), and, in more general terms, the density and multiplexity (Milroy, 1987; 2002) of the kin and faith networks which such traditions underpin.<sup>102</sup>

Moreover, such cultural, economic and spiritual expressions also function to demarcate clear boundaries with national linguistic culture, at the same time as they

---

<sup>101</sup> Lam (2009) is referring to Chicontla and Patla, also in the sierra poblana

<sup>102</sup> Field diaries; Informant C explains that performance is a religious commitment, social duty, and also honour: he made a public vow to dance for the religious feasts for a set number of years, and this includes rehearsals and a commitment to providing food and drink for festivities; on this point, there are differing explanations why the *voladores* was not performed for a number of years; some argue it was a protest at its commodification by other Totonac cultures locally (e.g. in Cuetzálan) who raise money performing it for tourists.

consolidate the functional premises for the language community's survival. At the same time, it should be noted that the community has long interacted with dominant culture, urban centres and the market economy, especially in terms of trade (e.g. selling coffee to merchants) and migrant waged labour (e.g. in Zacapoaxtla or Puebla) to supplement the household economy.

That said, the economy of Huehuetla/Kgoyom remains intensely rural with significant dependence on subsistence agriculture (production for domestic consumption), despite its interconnection with wider markets. Among the economically active population it is estimated that between 40 and 50% (Patiño, 2008) do not provide cash incomes to their households; rather, their contribution is effectuated through tangible provisions, such as agricultural produce, exchange or productive labour. If the population as a whole is considered (not just persons of working age), this means that 60% of the local population has no source of cash income (INEGI 2011c).<sup>103</sup>

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is suggested that eight out of ten local people were living in what the state terms 'absolute poverty' (SEDESOL/Mexican Ministry for Social Development, 2002). Meanwhile, the dependency ratio is high, meaning a larger number of persons depend on the productivity of a smaller number. In Huehuetla/Kgoyom this ratio was nearly 75/25 at the last census (INEGI 2011a), which, compares with the national dependency ratio of just over 50/50.<sup>104</sup>

One of the measures the Mexican government uses in discourses of development is the presence of a solid floor in the home (i.e. concrete or equivalent). In Huehuetla/Kgoyom, the last survey found that 16% do not have a solid floor (INEGI (2011a) compared to a state average of 10% (INEGI, 2011b). Approximately the same percentage which lack a solid floor also lack toilet facilities in the home, while a much higher figure (just over 40%) are not connected to sewerage, and the majority of local households (almost 66%) lack running water in the home.<sup>105</sup> In 2010, less

---

<sup>103</sup> School or college bursaries therefore constitute an important source of cash to households; meanwhile, only approximately 40% of the population over 15 is said to be economically active by INEGI (2011a, p164); but it is not clear how this concept has been specifically interpreted in context

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/stats/People/Age-distribution/Total-dependency-ratio>

<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, most traditional homes have efficient latrine systems and individual or shared access to wells or a water supply. In urban homes in Puebla, piped water is also not usually potable.

than 1% had household internet, and more than 60% did not have a TV set, although during the lifetime of this doctoral study there has been some development, due to the local distribution of TV sets by authorities (see Chapter 4).

In terms of wider infrastructure, recent changes are dynamically changing patterns of interaction with dominant national culture and penetration of the cash economy. In the last 20 years, the community has become connected to the main inter-serrano highway, allowing vehicles to travel directly between Huehuetla/Kgoyom and the large multicultural highland market town of Zacapoaxtla. In the last decade, inter-urban buses have been connecting these population centres, and as this thesis is being written, the road networks and transport services changing again, bringing direct coach services from Mexico City and Puebla.

Such developments have profound implications for language maintenance; meanwhile, this thesis argues these changes are in large measure fuelled by recent language policy, which in turn represents a strategic response to local political mobilisation around Totonac identity.<sup>106</sup> The culmination is that a major new university campus, its associated infrastructure and funding streams are being inserted into the small Huehuetla/Kgoyom hamlet of Lipuntahuaca, population approximately 1,400 (INEGI 2011a).<sup>107</sup>

Another issue to consider in terms of the community's perceived remoteness and accessibility is its altitude, climate and terrain. Located at high altitude in densely forested and precipitous terrain, Huehuetla/Kgoyom experiences milder temperatures than lowland Puebla, with high levels of humidity. In season, torrential rains can continue uninterrupted for days, producing landslides onto roads, opening potholes and making terrain impassable; mists and dense fog can envelop communities all year round, reducing visibility to almost zero for drivers on serpentine mountain

---

<sup>106</sup> For example, Mackay (1999:17) assumes a direct relationship between a new road connecting Misantla with Xalapa in 1974 and the loss of Totonac in these two communities and intervening towns of the sierra.

<sup>107</sup> Both national and local political elites (PRI deputies) pursued the opportunity provided by national policy and funds to host the new intercultural university for Puebla.

passes, factors which combine to intensify the community's perceived inaccessibility or remoteness.

However, this concept of remoteness requires caveat, since it primarily exists in the perceptions of outsiders. Unfamiliar with how such conditions can be negotiated successfully (e.g. on foot), such skewed perspective may lead to inaccurate conclusions about isolation, which are relevant to investigating language vitality. Two key issues emerge: the first concerns historic inter-group contact; the second concerns contact with, or rather, the level of insertion of, the dominant national Mexican Spanish linguistic culture, and the skewed socio-economic outcomes which result.

On the first point, the sierra poblana connects the western plains with the eastern coastline, forming part of Mexico's central mountain range or *sierra madre* which spans the country from west to east. According to local oral tradition, travellers on foot from other linguistic polities were attracted to the relative economic success and peaceful conditions found in the Totonac homeland or *Totonacapan*, interacted with Totonac cultures for the purposes of trade and barter, and even became employed and settled locally.<sup>108</sup> Oral tradition self-references Totonac polities as receptive, adaptive, consensual, and more concerned with social harmony and conflict avoidance than dogma.

Second, compared to other MIL communities in the *sierra*, oral tradition is that Huehuetla/Kgoyom has been fortunate in remaining relatively sheltered from natural disasters and skilfully self-sufficient to the extent of accumulating agricultural surplus, despite, or because of, its particular topology and climate. Oral tradition recalls the community gifting produce and supplies to other communities in the *sierra* in times of need even up to the very recent past.

In terms of accessibility and language, the single tarmac road which runs through the market town (at the time this study began) is an important marker of population distribution and language-use. Examination of the 2010 census and a 2008 local authority survey (Municipio de Huehuetla, 2008) reveals that, whereas only 10% of

---

<sup>108</sup> Field diaries note the oral tradition that in colonial times, black African slaves escaped and settled in the area; hence the Totonac folk stories and dance form of '*los negritos*' which continue today.

the local population does not speak Totonac, 90% of these (i.e. primarily mestizo population or monocultural Spanish-speakers) live within reach of the main road, whereas 90% of Totonac speakers do not.<sup>109</sup> In addition, it can be observed that mestizos disproportionately own or drive road vehicles and manage the infrastructure and services associated with the road network, e.g. taxis, buses, delivery services, garages, motels, and roadside restaurants.

This profile is in addition to their presence in commercial infrastructure associated with a lack of public service provision (e.g. private pharmacies next to the hospital, private dentists and doctors' surgeries in the town centre); their association with particular types of retail (e.g. shoe stores) and with commercial machinery (e.g. bakeries, coffee roasting and processing). By contrast, Totonac speakers predominate in other forms of trade (e.g. street food, agricultural and artisanal produce, butchering, and local grocery stores).

In other words, where communications infrastructure and public services are concerned, socio-economic constructs and policies combine with cultural and natural phenomena to privilege one language community over another. Spanish-speaking communities can accrue relative benefit, while MIL speakers are minoritised, in terms of the generation, circulation and accumulation of cash, which correlates with such infrastructure or services. On this topic, interesting findings by Greathouse (2005) suggest that the recent policy of promotion of rural tourism in indigenous communities in the *sierra* by local and national authorities is consolidating, rather than undermining, such advantage.

This conclusion resonates with an observation made in fieldwork for this study: informants often refer to local identities using terms which reference economic relationships to the environment. For example, if someone is 'from the community' this communicates that that s/he is linguistically and culturally Totonac, whether or

---

<sup>109</sup> Primarily the location of farmsteads on mountain slopes and in forested zones away from the road, combined with the disproportionate economic burden of vehicle ownership for cash-limited households, partially explain why the transport of goods, such as firewood and agricultural produce, largely continues on foot. The use of pack animals is minimal, more a feature of lowland mestizo agriculture on large estates dating back to the Spanish acquisition of collectively-held indigenous lands. According to Prem: 'The process of land transfer from Indian to Spanish hands in the heartland of Mexico took about one hundred years [...] by 1620 most Indian properties in the basin of Mexico and around Puebla had been awarded as land grants to Spaniards. [...] worked by Indian wage labour [...] and consolidated into large estates' (1992:458).

not s/he does actually live in the one of the smaller dispersed rural communities; however, ‘from the centre’ is a euphemism for mestizos or Spanish monoculturals, who predominantly live in the centre of the market town within access of the main road, and who disproportionately own or run the commercial and public infrastructure of the town, relative to their population size. Perhaps for this reason, the phrase is interchangeable with another, starker identifier: ‘the ones with money’. A term that informants report has been used intra-group since colonial times to denote Spaniards, and in the present day for mestizos, is *luwan*, literally snakes, i.e. untrustworthy and deceptive.<sup>110</sup>

The frequency with which identifiers appear in the discourse of young Totonac biculturals (especially the term ‘*from the centre*’) is indicative of a continual need to negotiate national linguistic culture with their own identity. The argument of this thesis is that first, such need carries repercussions for young Totonac speakers’ perceptions of the social valorisation of their identities and the sociolinguistic context in which they function, meaning that the unique character of their perspective offers invaluable insight into language management in the local environment; second, that this heightened awareness of the meaning and function of linguistic and cultural identities exists among MIL biculturals to an extent not experienced by their monolingual mestizo counterparts. To borrow the language of code-switching, to perform mestizo identity is an unmarked choice or congruent behaviour, while to perform indigenous identity is ‘marked’ and worthy of remark.

Having suggested that MIL biculturals operate a special burden (and gift) of identity processing and multicultural ideation, it is important not to lose sight of the particularly interesting and distinguishing feature of life in Huehuetla/Kgoyom: its strong adherence to and transmission of Totonac linguistic culture, to the extent that many parents of informants to this study (below middle-age at the time of writing) define themselves (in the latest census) as not speaking Spanish. Deeper analysis of this phenomenon is more pertinent to a study of language vitality than to this study of perceptions of language ideologies and policies: however, it remains pertinent to

---

<sup>110</sup> Although Náhuatl and Totonac are linguistically unrelated, both cultures use the same term, suggesting that it may be an intercultural loanword

consider contemporary and historic factors which contextualise the ideological formation of informants, and the socio-economic context in which their social and linguistic lives unfold.

During both the pre-colonial and colonial periods, although communities of the *Totonacapan* had been subjected to rule first by the Aztec/Mexica, and next by the Spanish, important features of Totonac linguistic culture had been retained in these processes, a consequence of the form of domination on the one hand, and the resilience of the Totonac culture on the other (see discussion in Chapter 2.2).<sup>111</sup>

When analysing the context today of language management in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, it is important to bear in mind these dual forces: an ancient, complex, highly developed local culture, historically successful in sustaining its cultural identity and vitality under pressure; and systems of economic and political subjugation which contradictorily, erode territorial borders (impacting on Totonac capacity for subsistence), while simultaneously reinforcing the conceptual borders around Totonac culture. In the context of independence and nation-building, the greater insertion of a dominant culture into the most personal aspects of Totonac cultural life, such as language and identity, and further erosion of the territorial capacity for economic autonomy, are themes discussed in highly specific terms in Chapter 3 in further analysis of the research milieu, and more generally in the analysis of research findings (Chapter 4) and their implications(Chapter 5 ).

### **Situating embodied speakers: connecting theory with practices**

Meanwhile, when deconstructing language management in a community such as Huehuetla/Kgoyom, it is also important, to reconsider certain sociolinguistic concepts and seek more contextually-appropriate notions, as was discussed in the theoretical contextualisation of Chapter 1, and as will be treated in the exposition of methods in Chapter 3. Such notions include the concept of home language practices (and indeed of the home domain itself), the idea of mother tongue (and what it means

---

<sup>111</sup> In local oral tradition in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, informants attribute both the persistence of Totonac linguistic culture, and a recurrent history of oppression and exploitation, to strong and successful traditions of self-sufficiency.

to know a language) and patterns of languaging and translanguaging practices. As will be seen in the findings and analysis (Chapter 4), informants do not simply code-switch neatly between Totonac and Spanish according to home or public domain, but continually engage in translanguaging, both within and beyond the domain of home.

To better comprehend home language practices means placing informants into social context and situating them within real-life homes. For example, most young people who speak Totonac in Huehuetla come from households engaged to some degree in subsistence agriculture. Therefore, notions of home domain and home language practices must be consistent with this fact.<sup>112</sup>

In subsistence agriculture (compared to waged agricultural labour), the economic and cultural practices of the household modify the nature of physical and conceptual boundaries between public and private space. The home domain - its productive practices, social relationships and associated interaction - may literally extend beyond the physical space of its four walls into the surrounding environment (indeed a house in this context may not always comprise four walls).<sup>113</sup> The economic, cultural, and linguistic life of the household may become enmeshed with that of others in a manner which requires concepts of both home and domains of language management to be reconsidered. As discussed in Chapter 1, it is for this reason that models of language management according to domain need to be highly congruent with social context.

For example, in subsistence households in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, land immediately surrounding the home is very important, since this is where household food is processed, animals are raised, plants tended, and possibly a well is sited. Of crucial importance is the parcel of land (adjacent or at some distance) where the household cultivates its staples for consumption and commercialisation, such as maize, coffee, vegetables and pulses, and the communal woodlands and pasture where households collect firewood and graze animals.

---

<sup>112</sup> On the relationship between architectural design, materials, environmental setting and changing use of space over time and across the year according to agricultural, cultural and religious purposes in a typical Totonac home see doctoral research by Olvera, 2005.

<sup>113</sup> Some houses exploit the shelter of the mountainside, so that an inner wall is formed by its face.



By their nature, such patterns of agriculture foster interdependence with a wider network of extended family and neighbours, and facilitate interactions with other households, passers-by, community members, and elders. Therefore, when considering the character of home language practices, it must be remembered that the home domain means a home life which literally extends out into the environment and enmeshes a wider range of interlocutors.

Likewise, subsistence agriculture demands that, from an early age, family members assume responsibilities in food production and processing (Ellison 2005, 2006; Patiño, 2008). These responsibilities often continue even when children and young people attend school or college, shape the nature of child-parent interaction along lines of gender and productive function, and modify intra- and extra-familial relations. For example, a female informant spends her weekdays at a Spanish-medium school and weekends with her Totonac monolingual mother producing and selling corn *tamales*, interacting with customers in Totonac; a male informant spends the weekends with his monolingual father and bilingual uncles interacting in Totonac as they use machetes to clear hillsides for planting.<sup>114</sup>

Gendered activities of the home domain are immensely important in terms of economic contribution to the household, in forging shared linguistic and cultural identity and bonds, and in the performance of obligations, rights and privileges (see Govers, 2006). Moreover, in a subsistence context, there needs to be awareness that the particular activities of the home domain and household hold meaning not only in terms of language practices and translanguaging, but also in the formation of a social outlook (Landweer, 2012), i.e. the value or esteem in which a linguistic culture holds its own identity and community (see discussion in Chapter 1).

Highly pertinent in such valorisation processes are tangibly personal issues such as well-being and welfare, sustenance, protection, affective co-dependence and tangible inter-reliance, expectations or sense of entitlement to assistance, as well as more directly valorising concepts such as reputation, social esteem and the respect an

---

<sup>114</sup> Field diaries; informants R and C.

individual believes they accrue within a household, or a family with a community. Both considerations interconnect with variables such as age and gender, which function to determine roles and responsibilities.

In other words, the socio-economic and cultural norms of a subsistence context express and reinforce high levels of co-dependency (across age and gender) which foster a sense of responsibility, and arguably, self-worth and value, with implications for individual and collective social outlook and valorisation of personal and collective identity. On this, it is interesting to note the case of CPF alumni, now university graduates, who have returned to Huehuetla/Kgoyom to volunteer as teachers at the CPF.<sup>115</sup> Despite not having a cash salary, they report that life is no more difficult than within the urban cash economy, and that they feel more secure within the safety net of an extended subsistence household, and more valorised as teachers, being afforded respect by their community.

In addition, the subsistence paradigm means gendered activities may accrue particular intra-group value which may not be appreciated or even perceived in another cultural context. For example, a survey of Totonac households in Huehuetla/Kgoyom (Patiño, 2008) estimated that, in monetary terms, the contribution by women and girls to a household's agricultural production (for the market or domestic consumption), equates to over two-thirds the contribution by male kin (Patiño, 2008:101).<sup>116</sup> This is in addition to the other female duties which sustain household productive capacity, such as caring for its members and resources, but have not been evaluated in economic terms. Moreover, women's petty trade in food products is often the only regular source of cash for the household, in the absence of discontinuous government grants, such as high school or college bursaries (Patiño 2008).

---

<sup>115</sup> Field diaries (informants M and J).

<sup>116</sup> Other non-monetary measures of gendered contributions to households are possible, such as calorific value (joules of energy); for example, the value of women's work converting heads of corn into flour and a range of edible products; see Patiño (2008) In a survey of over 800 Kgoyom Totonac households (5% of the local Totonac community), he broke down informants' production by sex and crop in kg per year, and calculated the average local market price for maize, beans and coffee, to arrive at a figure of almost 69%.

By implication, these distinct, gendered, but equally essential roles performed in a subsistence culture place heavy demands on individuals and households; at the same time, they connote tangible and intangible value. In turn, such co-dependency and valorisation extend from the household and interconnect with a wider, inter-reliant community, in which obligations and returns are normative practices, and reciprocity is a defining principle of social organisation and relationships. Indeed, in the Americas, this cultural principle – reciprocity – is argued to be one of the most definitive of indigenous identity, and an arena of enduring conflict with dominant national cultures (which are characterised as informed by the market values of late capitalism and as such, more individualistic (Garcia Canclini, 1995).

Therefore, the value of subsistence agriculture as a holistic project may be better appreciated by Totonac-speakers who are raised within it, and comprehend the roles upon which it relies, and afford value to the identity of those who perform its functions. This value can be unappreciated by others, but more importantly, wilfully overlooked, so that the linguistic culture associated with such lifestyles is misrepresented (for example, as undeveloped, or retrograde), and its identity is devalorised, in order to privilege the identity of national or dominant culture. A concept which this doctoral study challenges is that Totonac speakers lack positive social outlook, and feel a sense of shame or unworthiness, relative to monolingual, monocultural Spanish speakers or mestizos. It argues that these myths are disseminated since they are useful in reproducing asymmetries of power, in a form of victim-blaming.

Even where Totonac or other MIL speakers repeat such myths, such behaviours still require greater analysis beyond simplistic conclusions that one social class is embarrassed in the presence of another. For example, there is a popular myth that Totonac speakers refer to the dominant culture as *gente de razón* (or people of reason/rationale) and in rhyming contrast, to themselves as *gente de calzón* (*calzón* is the Spanish term for the breeches-style trousers that Totonac men wear). This saying appears to imply that Totonacs perceive themselves as ‘simple folk’, without the same capacity for logic. However, the term *gente de razón* is a colonial legacy, an identifier used in its formalised racial hierarchies (*sistema de castas*) which were institutionalised to distinguish the civic rights of social groups relative to one another

(Hartog et al, 2005). *Gente de razón* was applied to people regarded as culturally Hispanic and viewed as ‘rational’, in contrast to native people and other groups, such as black African slaves, or persons of ‘mixed race’. Such *gente de calzón* were deemed to lack the mental capacity to warrant full citizenship or personal autonomy. Instead, the ‘*Ley de Indios*’ provided a legal framework designating them the status of minors under crown protection (Bartolomé, 2006).

This conceptualisation of indigenous people as minors connotes a diminishment of their personhood, a reduction in intellectual capacity and agency, and in civic stature, rights and opportunities for participation. This reductive ideology, once crudely framed in colonial terminology and legislation, at the same time is paternalistic, co-opting MIL communities into state control. These themes are recalled by informants as they discuss identities in the study’s findings (Chapter 4) and illustrate how abstract constructs of identity hold real-life consequences for speakers who experience different relations of social power to public institutions and dominant culture. In the following chapter (3) it will be seen how the local social history of Huehuetla/Kgoyom has included successful political mobilisation around linguistic identity, in an effort to change such relations and the nature of public institutions (particularly in healthcare, education and policing). These events firmly anchor discussion of language ideologies and policies in this thesis to wider political processes which communicate the valorisation or minoritisation of embodied MIL speakers.

## **2.4 Conclusion: ideologies and policies of language in context**

This chapter began with the major historical drivers of sociolinguistic change in Mexico. In the aftermath of war with Spain, France, the US, and its own people during armed revolution, the emergent Mexican Republic needed a powerful identity around which to construct the apparatus of a nation-state for the most linguistically diverse population of the Americas, and to secure its cultural and territorial boundaries in the face of continued existential threat. Its recourse to a unifying language on the one hand, and an amorphous and generic, but no less affecting sense of shared indigenous heritage on the other, is contextualised by these events, and informs a project which has inevitably been acculturative and reductive in nature. On this point, the chapter has reiterated that if the Mexican state has been and remains so bound up with reformulating and disseminating its own identity, this should be regarded as a function of historic colonialism, rather than some quirk of the Mexican psyche. The challenge to negotiate global centres and articulations of power (economic, academic, and linguistic) amidst profound legacies of colonialism, have driven the imperative for the nation to continually define, delimit and depict itself.

A (de)constructivist approach has therefore aided understanding Mexican social and linguistic identities less as characteristics and more as situational responses, as relationships of ethnicity and nationality, language-use and cultural identity, which are context-bound and value-laden. For example, as the chapter continued, it was seen that even linguistic typologies of Totonac continually shift according to the agency and agenda of state and academic institutions, with the result that historic languages spoken for centuries in Huehuetla/Kgoyom are only recently being ‘discovered’. Similarly, binaries have emerged between indigeneity as a state-defined identity on the one hand, and indigeneity as the lived experience of MIL speakers on the other, and tensions between how such identities are chosen, performed and conferred. Given that these have remained politically contentious concepts into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the present interconnection of language policies and ideologies to wider socio-political context is again highlighted by this review of the past. As the thesis continues, informants explore conceptualisations of what it means to be Mexican, to be bicultural, to speak a MIL, and to perform an identity subject to competing ideological and political pressures of valorisation and minoritisation.

## **Chapter 3: Milieu and Methods**

### **3.0 Introduction to fieldwork milieu and methodologies**

This study's research questions (see Chapter 1) pursue a deconstruction of language ideologies and policies of MIL, in order to identify implications for the embodied MIL speaker, with decolonising praxis in mind as both process and product of the research - that is, 'reflection and action directed at the [local] structures to be transformed' (Freire, 1970:126). To this end, this chapter develops on the deconstruction of local environment posited in Chapter 2, by further analysing specific socio-political aspects of the milieu of the research study, and by reflecting on the congruity of the methods this study has employed. The chapter opens with analysis of recent socio-political history in Huehuetla/Kgoyom., with a focus on specific events, actors and institutions which, it argues, have created a unique milieu for reflection on the symbiosis of language ideologies, policies and management on the one hand, and cultural and linguistic valorisation and minoritisation on the other. Themes of cultural control, power and violence emerge as central to the analysis, and occur here and throughout the thesis.

With such themes in mind, the second section of the chapter connects reflection on this study's methodology (participants, instruments, scope and limits), to questions of decolonising research praxis. Such praxis, it argues, is informed not only by constructs from the academic community (such as participatory action research or PAR), but by local cultural norms of the milieu (such as Totonac mechanisms of reciprocity). These intersections create spaces where, to use Mallon's (2012) terms, research praxis can facilitate a decolonisation of local knowledges, theories and discourses, rather than their 'recolonisation' by a globalising academy. A critical consciousness of such purposes and positionalities therefore informs the principles of the methodology, which include greater transparency and reciprocity of exchange between parties. This objective is partly articulated through a simultaneous project of community engagement to produce a local literacy tool and marketable item, in acknowledgement, if not quite reciprocation, of the lifetime benefits that accrue to the researcher from the participation of local informants.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup> The term 'informant' is used to make clear the direction of information transfer; it is interchanged with Bonilla's (2015) term 'experiential expert' (discussed shortly) to convey how unparalleled insight is gained from informants; these were individually enrolled in the research process with ethical

### 3.1 Research context: social actors and antecedents

The sociolinguistic character of the local community (discussed in Chapter 2) provides the backdrop to a local political trajectory that, as will be seen, instrumentalises ideologies and policies of MIL to produce specific, cultural legacies. These legacies are directly relevant to this study's methods and include the two institutions from which informants have been drawn: the Colegio Paulo Freire (CPF), the only independent Totonac school in Mexico, established in Huehuetla/Kgoyom in 1994 by the local community; and the Universidad Intercultural del Estado de Puebla (UIEP), established there a decade later by the Mexican government.

#### **Cultural control & public policy: Organización Independiente Totonaca (OIT)**

In 1989 (five years before the Zapatista march on Mexico City discussed in Chapter 2.1), a less publicised but no less significant political mobilisation instrumentalising MIL-identity had occurred in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, when the OIT or *Organización Independiente Totonaca* (Independent Totonac Organisation) displaced the governing PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*) from its uninterrupted history of municipal (and national power) in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When the first local formal political administration claiming MIL identity was formed,<sup>118</sup> this thesis argues, a permanent mark was left on the local cultural and linguistic landscape, most notably in the arena of education.<sup>119</sup>

The OIT was formally constituted in 1989 but had been preceded by years of consciousness-raising in Totonac communities by a mix of lay and religious activists,

---

approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Liverpool. The term 'participant' is largely avoided so as not to falsely mislead regarding the share of decision-making between parties, given that priorities were still determined by the boundaries of PhD research and ordinances of the university.

<sup>118</sup> This social history is a composite summary of research conversations conducted in the field, unless otherwise stated, with persons who directly participated in events of the 1980s and 1990s. It responds to the call by SilverMoon & Ennis (2008) for 'a genealogy of indigenous intellectual and political activism' and for histories otherwise 'obscured' by dominant voices (2008:165). Since it is a general re-casting of events, filtered through the contextual performance of participants and reception of the researcher, it does not claim to offer a definitive record; rather it provides orientation to the current ideological and political context underpinning language management in Huehuetla/Kgoyom. It is cross-referenced where appropriate to the limited body of published research on these events, notably Smith (2004; 2007), Wahrhaftig (1995), and Wahrhaftig & Vallverdu (2003). These latter two authors also collaborated for Vallverdu's (1998) short film on the elections in Huehuetla/ Kgoyom of that year, and again with Lane's (1999) longer documentary of these events.

<sup>119</sup> Political office has been held by individuals of indigenous origin; famously President Benito Juarez from 1858-1872; however, the difference here is a conscious juxtaposition of collective identity between the administration and Mexican national culture and centres of power.



concerned at the erosion of the community's capacity for economic and cultural autonomy, and the apparently incontestable nature of political and economic structures where mestizo power was concentrated.<sup>120</sup> The OIT's eventual pursuit of political office arose from a nexus of national political events and global economic trends, local environmental conditions and political opportunity.

In the 1980s, small-scale coffee producers had experienced severe hardship as global and national markets liberalised.<sup>121</sup> In Huehuetla/Kgoyom, mestizos had exercised disproportionate control over coffee merchandising and processing, meaning that as state protections for producers dissipated, the economic position of mestizos actually consolidated.<sup>122</sup> An unusually harsh frost in 1989 caused the coffee crop to fail, exacerbating a cultural shift that had led to Totonac farmers' over-dependence on cash-crops, and consequent vulnerability to market as well as climatic conditions.<sup>123</sup>

Whereas Totonac communities had historically met their own needs to a large extent, operating their own cultural institutions to distribute rights and resources, (such as the Council of Elders and Indigenous Tribunal) the increasing insertion of the state and market had positioned Totonac farmers first into a paternalistic relationship with the state, then vulnerability to exploitative markets, and finally dependency on charity and development assistance.<sup>124</sup>

There is an argument that indigenous self-reliance has historically served national and local centres of power by materially compensating for the inadequacy of public services and the maladministration of public funds, allowing rural poverty to persist

---

<sup>120</sup> The OIT was formed as a civil society organisation patronised by San Salvador (a syncretic Totonac/Catholic saint). Early political education and popular organising had been led primarily by rural catechists, proponents of liberation theology and Catholic social teaching; for example, an indigenist priest who had learnt Totonac encouraged syncretic symbolism and ritual to reflect local identities, including a reproduction of the *Tajín* pyramid as an altar in the parish church. For a contrasting perspective on such relationships between the Catholic Church, revitalisation of MIL identity and political mobilisation, see Trejo, 2009.

<sup>121</sup> In earlier decades, subsistence farmers had been encouraged by national economic policy, state subsidies and price guarantees, to increasingly adopt commercial coffee production and move away from subsistence.

<sup>122</sup> As Smith (2004) points out, these comprised the same local PRI functionaries who distributed state development aid to impoverished farmers.

<sup>123</sup> At the same time, commercial coffee production had degraded environmental resources and deskilled farmers for traditional subsistence, undermining a fundamental basis of Totonac identity and autonomy.

<sup>124</sup> Moreover, state aid was channelled locally by mestizo PRI functionaries, further consolidating power into their hands and skewing the relationship between the linguistic cultures (Smith, 2004:406). On this point, young informants also complain that today they are unfairly characterised by mestizos as '*vividores*' or scroungers, living off 'handouts' (see findings in Chapter 4).



(González Casanova, 1965). While acknowledging this problematisation of subsistence societies in relationship to global, industrial and post-industrial culture, this thesis argues that in the specific historical moment when the OIT emerged, and in the socio-cultural context of Huehuetla/Kgoyom, there are two more immediately relevant issues: first, that the capacity of Totonac linguistic culture to reproduce itself and secure the well-being of its communities was being seriously jeopardised by the character and impact of state policy, whilst the relative privilege of local mestizo elites was being preserved; second, that self-reliance and public office are not per se mutually exclusive concepts.<sup>125</sup>

Indeed, the heuristic, cooperative nature of Totonac subsistence culture has proved itself capable of sustaining continuity and effectuating change through community participation; the political issue (and social injustice) is that this capacity has not been acknowledged by the state, and the corresponding share in power to determine the wider context they inhabit has been withheld, by instrumentalising ideologies and policies of social and linguistic identities.

Against this backdrop, political mobilisation was articulated in a revitalisation of traditional Totonac agriculture and identity. Importantly, the (Spanish-language) slogan of identity chosen by the OIT – *si con el nombre de indios nos humillaron y explotaron, con el nombre de indios nos libraremos* [if they used the name ‘Indian’ to humiliate and exploit us, we will use it to liberate us] – indicates that social and linguistic identity is a mutable, conferred construct (rather than inherited value) and can be instrumentalised in effectuating change to sociolinguistic order. A Totonac – speaking mayoral candidate was chosen for the OIT; however, a civil society, non-partisan organisation could not legally stand for political office and so an alliance was agreed with a newly emergent left-wing party, the PRD.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>125</sup> In a reversal of fortunes, informants recall that a decade later in 1999, hurricanes caused landslides closing road closures as far back as Zacapoaxtla, meaning Totonac subsistence farmers were called upon to provide aid to mestizo families when shops and traders in the centre lost access to supplies. When aid was eventually helicoptered in from Puebla, some mestizos argued it should not be sent to the Totonac communities, since they had the means to support themselves.

<sup>126</sup> A Totonac liberation theology catechist, literacy educator and current governor of the CPF school (who participated in editing *Tsikan chu Nipxi* – see 3.3). Tensions would emerge years later between the PRD and OIT to the extent that OIT’s support among ordinary Totonac voters was jeopardised; however at this initial point the perception was that the PRD facilitated OIT into the mayoralty, given that OIT could not otherwise hold office.

There are suggestions that concerns over social cohesion initially led to some reluctance among Totonac voters to become drawn into party politics because, first, there were risks of creating divisions between community members with strong cultural ties of obligation and association, for example, godparent duties or service to in-laws, (Govers, 2006); and second, in a context where reciprocity and voluntary service is central to identity, there was a risk that performance of such cultural acts could be perceived as or instrumentalised for partisan purposes (Vallverdú & Wahrhaftig, 2003).<sup>127</sup>

Relations between Totonac and Mestizo communities certainly did become even more strained: the impact of the 1989 OIT electoral success, according to informants, is that tensions with ‘those from the centre’ immediately heightened at the prospect of ‘being governed by ‘Indians.’<sup>128</sup> Indices of Totonac cultural revitalisation were perceived as threats to the interests of local mestizo elites, and such fears were exacerbated by an early measure to collectivise the supply of coffee from small producers onto the market, instantly reducing the leverage of mestizo buyers over Totonac farmers.<sup>129</sup> Meanwhile, the mobilisation capacity of OIT grew and it was successful in renewing its terms of mayoral office until 1998.

Despite the capacity of the OIT to mobilise Totonac voters, its electoral success had been premised not so much on a shared sense of cultural identity (since the local cultural profile is rather homogenous); rather, as Smith (2004) claims, it was a shared experience of asymmetrical power relationships with the national culture, embodied by local mestizo agents. Therefore, a by-product of mobilisation around socio-economic marginalisation and cultural minoritisation resulted in an apparent (but not inevitable) binarisation of identities.

This study’s focus on community well-being and the ideological and political formation of MIL minoritisation and valorisation means there are several distinctive

---

<sup>127</sup> Some claim (e.g. Ellison 2004) that no more than half the local population supported the OIT’s electoral alliance with the PRD, nonetheless an impressive statistic, while others (Smith, 2004) report more than three quarters of the municipal population were members of the OIT at its height.

<sup>128</sup> Field diaries informant P.

<sup>129</sup> Nonetheless, it enhanced the popularity of the OIT among Totonac families who had been previously reluctant (Smith, 2004).

features of OIT's nine years of office that are worth mention. First, its attempt at adherence to Totonac decision-making structures, rather than co-optation into the political mechanisms of national culture, is more than a symbolic gesture of cultural and linguistic affirmation. Through maintaining deference to the Council of Elders, holding traditional community consultations and assemblies, and an open door policy to individuals attending at the mayoralty, and importantly, using the Totonac language in all such fora, the OIT administration could achieve two important innovations. On the one hand, it facilitated the direct political participation of Totonac speakers traditionally excluded from consultation and decision-making ; on the other hand, it addressed issues of particular concern to a Totonac-predominant community, which had been neglected by successive administrations who operated through the prism of national culture. This consciousness of marginalisation by national culture is also attested to by the OIT's formation of an intercultural alliance, UNITONA, or Totonac and Náhuatl Union, to promote mutual interests in key areas such as coffee production and merchandising, and access to land and grazing.

The second feature stems from the first, in that the administration's alignment with and instrumentalisation of traditional cultural and linguistic practices meant that, having won political leverage over public funds and resources, it could also legitimately summon Totonac communities to collectively participate and achieve tangible outcomes for the municipality at an accelerated pace and controlled cost. For example, mestizo or national culture equates improved communications infrastructure with road-building, but Totonac speakers usually travel on foot to homes and plots at considerable distance from the road; volunteer work-gangs were quickly formed by the OIT mayoralty and materials provided from public funds to restore and extend the network of drystone mountain footpaths and cross-country trails. This achievement, which tangibly improved the quality of life of for Totonac speakers, is frequently recalled by informants, and be said to represent both an ideological shift (cultural appropriateness) and a political change, or act of management which utilises the resources and mechanisms of both national culture and local MIL culture.

Historically, improvements in local infrastructure had disproportionately focussed on servicing the municipal town centre where the minority mestizo population is concentrated. Therefore, the OIT administration sought to re-balance such uneven

development, for example by connecting Totonac homesteads to the national electricity, water and sewerage systems. Significantly, it pursued the construction of public services with a Totonac cultural format, in key areas of local concern, such as healthcare, education and dispute resolution. For example, the OIT opened a Totonac-speaking health clinic and dispensary of traditional medicine using herbs from local producers; a Totonac-speaking community tribunal was formally instituted for intra-group dispute resolution, regulated by the Council of Elders, and accompanied by a Totonac-speaking law surgery; finally, the first independent Totonac high school was established, the CESIK or Kgoyom Indigenous High School (forerunner to today's Colegio Paulo Freire).

For this reason, this doctoral study has based its analysis of language valorisation and minoritisation by researching perceptions of ideologies and policies in these three key areas of public services – healthcare, education and policing (Chapter 4)

### **Cultural control and education: CESIK - Colegio Paulo Freire:**

With a Totonac municipal administration in place, the Council of Elders considered the issue of high school education. The first high school in the community had only opened in 1984, just five years prior to OIT's electoral success, but elders had been receiving complaints since its inception.<sup>130</sup>

Indeed, Mexican public education was known to be under-performing, and the achievement of rural and indigenous pupils was of particular concern.<sup>131</sup> In schools

---

<sup>130</sup> Complaints of poorly educated and trained teachers are echoed in the national review of education conducted by RAND (2005) which reviews the data of Schmelkes, 1994; Tatto, 1999; Tatto and Velez, 1999; and Santibañez, 2004. Most teachers enter normales or training schools from high school with poor educational records, and begin teaching as interns soon after entry. Meanwhile, approximately 40% of all schoolteachers have no training. I attended SEP in-service training in Zacapoaxtla for teachers from sierra high schools, as part of the ethnographic fieldwork; of this study and some reference to this is made in discussions in Chapter 5.

<sup>131</sup> Mexico ranked last or second to last in maths and science on the TIMSS-95 and below the mean score for Latin America on UNESCO tests (RAND 2005). Less than a fifth of primary-school leavers achieved satisfactory competency in maths, and fewer than half of secondary school leavers. Less than half of urban 6th graders achieved in SEP tests of Reading (45%); and less than a third of rural (29%); Rural community and indigenous schools are often multi-grade, meaning that one or two teachers are responsible for teaching all subjects and grades. These schools make up approximately 25% of schools. Nationally, achievement in multi- grade schools was only 18% and in other schools identified as 'Indigenous' just 12%. In maths, these figures are: Urban 15%; Rural 9%; multi- grade 6%; Indigenous 4%. Source: INEE, 2003; cited in RAND (2005). By contrast, approximately 40% of secondary school enrolments in low-income rural areas are in Telesecundarias or distance learning units, with teaching by TV or radio (or nowadays internet). Here, students have achieved satisfactory competency in the national reading and mathematics achievement tests administered by SEP (INEE,

which the state identified as ‘indigenous’, only 12% of sixth graders (eleven plus) were achieving satisfactory levels in national literacy tests, and only 4% in maths (RAND, 2005). In Puebla, illiteracy rates were higher (10%) than the national average (7%).<sup>132</sup> The number of years in school completed by speakers of MIL in Puebla was half the national average.<sup>133</sup> However, from 1990 – 2000 MIL –speakers’ school attendance in Puebla had increased and was observed as slightly higher among Totonac students than among other linguistic groups (INEGI, 2004:47).<sup>134</sup>

Meanwhile, Totonac elders were also concerned by the attitudes and behaviour of mestizo teachers. Teaching posts in rural and indigenous communities have often been filled by outsiders (Valdovinos, 2015) and viewed as unpopular, so have tended to be filled by interns or the least qualified and experienced, who fail to commit (seen in rates of absenteeism up to 50% per day per year in rural schools (RAND, 2005). According to local community members who remember the period, families felt the teachers held the community in disdain, for example, by drinking in public and buying alcohol for youngsters, and by male teachers engaging in coercive sexual relations with local girls, including pupils.

In addition, teachers were perceived as overtly discriminatory: an example concerns the distribution of government bursaries, payable in cash to mothers by schools.<sup>135</sup> These were introduced to encourage children from economically deprived households to attend post-16 education.<sup>136</sup> Complaints alleged these grants were

---

2003). In Puebla, the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 1995 had found illiteracy rates higher than national averages at 7 in 100 nationally but 10 in 100 in Puebla (BUAP 2012).

<sup>132</sup> Based on data from the 1995 TIMSS or Third International Mathematics and Science Study (see BUAP, 2012).

<sup>133</sup> Average years of schooling completed by the population aged 15 and over is 7.9 years for Puebla, compared to 9.5 years in Mexico City and Nuevo León, but better than Chiapas and Oaxaca which is 6 years. Speakers of MIL spend an average of three years in primary education, which is half the average number for the population as a whole (BUAP 2012).

<sup>134</sup> Disparities between urban, rural and indigenous schools had also been noted elsewhere in the Americas; for example, indigenous language groups in Peru reportedly characterised state provision as ‘poor education for poor people (Oliart, 2011). In general terms, recurrent underperformance by marginalised groups, it has been argued (Gee, 1990:25), betrays the function of state education: namely to socialise pupils into the status quo, in which they are excluded from, and by, the literacy practices of elites. Such argument resonates with notions of decolonising praxis in research and policy formation and is returned to in the light of findings in Chapter 5.

<sup>135</sup> The ‘Oportunidades’ programme (now ‘Prospera’), is monitored by the World Bank. See <https://www.gob.mx/prospera>. The perception that non-Totonacs were gate-keeping access to public bursaries should be contextualised by recalling that locally, regular cash incomes are often low or nil.

<sup>136</sup> Most recent figures indicate that only half of the eligible cohort enrolls in post-16 education, and just over a third of these (35%) reach completion (BUAP, 2012).

being withheld to Totonac mothers on trivial pretexts, but not from mestizo mothers. Eventually a series of protests by Totonac pupils and parents culminated in Totonac families withdrawing their children en bloc, such that the Ministry of Education was forced to mothball and eventually close the high school.

Against this backdrop, the OIT decided to create its own Totonac high school, and the CESIK or *Centro de Estudios Superiores Kgoiyom* (Kgoiyom Centre for Further Education) was founded in 1994, under the directorship of the late Griselda Tirado, a Totonac speaker from the community who had worked as a human rights lawyer in Mexico City, and been instrumental in establishing the OIT. Tirado was joined by an activist in popular education (Spanish monolingual, with mixed cultural heritage), who brought expertise from CESDER, Mexico's first university-accredited peasant college, heavily informed by the pedagogy and participatory ethos of Brazilian educationalist and activist Paulo Freire.<sup>137</sup>

This ethos contrasts with the highly centralised nature of Mexican education, including control over 'indigenous' provision (RAND, 2005; BUAP, 2012); the Totonac community's insistence on parental participation in the new school's governance can also be juxtaposed with the ideologies and policies of national, dominant culture.<sup>138</sup> In the same vein is its adaptation of curriculum to cultural and linguistic context: academic subjects were combined with what the OIT termed a 'local syllabus', notably aimed at re-skilling young people for a revitalisation of subsistence lifestyles, following the de-skilling caused by commercial coffee production.<sup>139</sup>

The model the OIT/CESIK was constructing as an alternative to state provision was explicitly characterised as Totonac, meaning that the term 'Totonac' became at once

---

<sup>137</sup> Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Rural or College for Rural Development in Zautla, Puebla.

<sup>138</sup> The new CESIK school was run by its (non-Totonac heritage) director, deferring to an open assembly of parents, teachers and students, and ultimately to the Totonac Council of Elders.

<sup>139</sup> These include traditional agriculture, bee-keeping, preserves, poultry, fishing, wood-carving, textiles and crafts, newer technologies such as computing, and sports and the arts, especially dance, chess and music. At times the school has trained girls as well as boys as flying dancers, making a break with Totonac tradition. The infrastructure of the school serves as a community resource and learning hub (in later years it has included internet and computer training facilities), a substantial library, a bakery and kitchen for micro-enterprises. As part of the quid pro quo of this doctoral study (see Chapter 3) teaching was delivered at the CPF school by the researcher. In an independent but inter-connecting project, two Year Abroad students of the University of Liverpool volunteered as language assistants at the CPF, learning about Totonac language and culture while helping pupils prepare for the English language component of university entrance exams.

a descriptor of its pedagogic objectives, methods and structures, as well as a linguistic or cultural identifier, which speaks to analysis of the community's 'social outlook' (Landweer, 2010) and valorisation of its own identity as a linguistic culture. In this respect, it is important to note that identification with Totonac culture was nevertheless premised from the outset by collaboration between Totonac and non-Totonac parties. Therefore, indigeneity should be understood in this context to be more about the indexing of an ethos, or conceptual paradigm, rather than a specific ethnic or linguistic identity.

Initially, teachers did not receive salaries, and were materially supported by the community, in return for performing service, a normative practice in Totonac culture. This cultural mechanism is worth reflection because it illustrates issues of pertinence. First, an ideological commitment towards Totonac education as a legitimate project; second, a level of interaction and co-dependency between parents and teachers; and finally, a demonstration of how cultural mechanisms can redistribute rights and resources.

In other words, the exercise of linguistic and political autonomy are bound up with economic constraints and opportunities for expression of cultural control. Therefore, the extent to which cultural mechanisms (and thus autonomy and identity) are undermined or complemented by state institutions, is of interest when analysing state discourses of public service provision in indigenous communities.

### **Cultural control and paradigmatic power: assassination of CESIK's founder**

As the CESIK consolidated and began attracting national attention, so it conferred prestige on the OIT, meaning that ironically, its success only heightened local partisan and intercultural tensions.<sup>140</sup> As a politically valuable asset, the school became a site of contention for the OIT's political rivals.<sup>141</sup> After nearly a decade in office, the OIT lost the 1998 elections to the PRI, amid disaffection for the local PRD (the OIT's partners) and reports of voter threats and bribes by the PRI. In the period

---

<sup>140</sup> CESIK had gained the kudos of accreditation by a university, a way of obtaining grant-maintained status rather than direct SEP control, was achieving nearly 100% graduation and channelling alumni to university admission. Apart from state grants, it was the target of donations of equipment, cash and books from unions and political allies inspired by the OIT mobilisation in Huehuetla, covered in the left-wing press at the time.

<sup>141</sup> For example, rumours were allegedly spread by PRI militants that the school was training Totonac terrorists and siphoning municipal funds to its cause.



between 1998 and 2001 elections, inter-community tensions (see Smith, 2004 and Lane, 1999) were exacerbated by a lack of response from the police to physical assaults on OIT members.

In this context, Smith (2004) argues that a perceived binary emerged between Totonac culture, the OIT, the CESIK, and the PRD on the one hand, with mestizo or national culture, the governing PRI and the apparatus of the state on the other. When the PRI won for a second time in 2001, with increased Totonac support, this alleged dichotomy became even more sensitive ideological territory. At the time, Tirado (the CESIK's director) was filmed accusing PRI activists of buying Totonac votes by distributing household items and snacks.

Following its second defeat, public infrastructure that had been established under the OIT (in the areas of healthcare and community justice) began to be dismantled, and with heightened social tensions, the OIT decided to withdraw from party politics. It performed a public ritual of returning the statue of its patron, San Salvador, to the parish church and declaring that the OIT had 'invested its power for safe-keeping in San Salvador'. Nevertheless, informants suggest that Tirado had been left permanently identified with the PRD, and as such, vulnerable to local political enemies. For example, she was said to have been suddenly targeted by a campaign of malicious gossip (despite having always lived in the community without a husband), which informants claim is a common technique to provide a personal, criminal pretext for a political assassination.

Tirado was killed in high-profile fashion on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2003, the feast day of San Salvador, patron of the OIT and the most important day in the Huehuetla/Kgoyom calendar. As the founder of the only high school at the time, Tirado would have been expected to attend as a celebrated guest in the public festivities hosted by the mayor. She was shot in front of her house, the home raided, and death threats made on the family, so that her sister fled the community, taking Tirado's young daughter.<sup>142</sup> A police statement suggested Tirado had probably been involved with a married man,

---

<sup>142</sup> Since then a significant section of the Totonac community refuses to participate in the public festivities and religious procession of San Salvador in acknowledgement of Tirado's assassination.



and killed by a hitman hired by a jealous wife. No judicial investigation took place and questions formally raised by Amnesty International were not answered.<sup>143</sup>

In the period following Tirado's killing, the school and its assets were annexed to direct municipal control by the governing PRI, and the linguistic identity of the co-founder of CESIK (i.e. Tirado's successor) was converted into an arena of political contention for the first time since its inception.<sup>144</sup> The administration argued that since it had been elected by Totonac voters, the school should come under its control, and be run instead by a (Totonac –speaking) public functionary (a PRI municipal official), rather than its non-Totonac co-founder. However, once this was implemented, 26 of the 27 Totonac families with children attending withdrew them. Instead, they moved with the co-founder to attend another version of the school, which today is known as the Colegio Paulo Freire (CPF) and houses the 'Griselda Tirado' library.<sup>145</sup> Meanwhile the municipal-run CESIK school has remained open, but in 2013 had only six pupils, compared to 58 at CPF.

The CPF school has continued into the present day, retaining its cultural character of governance and curriculum.<sup>146</sup> For example, students cultivate and sell crops (coffee, maize, pepper) on school land to subsidise its running costs; it does not have a uniform, does not charge *cuotas* (a discretionary but almost obligatory contribution in state schools) and provides books and stationery without charge, significant barriers to education among cash-limited families. Retention rates are high and graduation rates close to 100%, including an annual progression of alumni into higher education. Its consciously constructed identity and governance arguably constitute important determinants of academic success, as claimed when other minoritised communities have taken ownership of education (McCarty & Roessel, 2015).<sup>147</sup>

A distinguishing feature at CPF is not so much the absence of Spanish, but rather the presence of Totonac; it is freely spoken inside and outside the classroom, is the

---

<sup>143</sup> see Amnesty International Mexico:

<https://amnistia.org.mx/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=68>

<sup>144</sup> Its SEP accreditation was retained by the municipality and would take a decade to recover.

<sup>145</sup> CESIK became the 'Preparatoria Huehuetla' and eventually the current CPF in January 2012.

<sup>146</sup> Don Mateo Sanchez, the former OIT mayor sits on the board of governors; day-to-day leadership, administration and teaching falls to the director and two Totonac-speaking teachers who are CPF alumni and university graduate, plus a series of mestizo, Totonac and foreign volunteers, and staff from a high school in a deprived area of Mexico state, whose teachers belong to a trade union which arranges their secondments to CPF.

<sup>147</sup> Their claim relates to the Rough Rock School in Arizona serving the Navajo-Diné community.

subject of study, a medium of communication between teachers and pupils if language is shared, and pupils interpret for monolingual parents as required.<sup>148</sup> By contrast, secondary schools are exclusively Spanish-speaking domains, even during recreation (see Chapter 4), with reprimands for Totonac-use. The key issue lies in the communication of attitudes - to use García's (2009:9) terms, it has achieved the normalisation of multilingual practices for the purposes of learning and communicating. This bilingual policy and ideology is expressed de-facto in actual language practices in education, which communicate beliefs regarding the appropriateness of MIL for this domain, and by extension, its adequacy for the purposes of public, academic, and professional life.

Ironically, the violence of the assassination of the CPF's founder interconnects with the school's successful continuity, the agency of parents, and the latter-day local emergence of state-sponsored, MIL-identified institutions, notably the UIEP. Each phenomenon is testament to the power of MIL identity as a mobilising factor, (whether viewed as opportunity or threat), and the value of cultural control. At a particular moment in history, a community altered the terms of engagement between MIL-speakers and the Mexican state apparatus, without the use of violence, and despite the use of violence against them. Today, Huehuetla/Kgoyom has an additional three state high schools, retains the autonomous CPF, and is now the location for the state of Puebla's first Intercultural University (the UIEP).<sup>149</sup>

### **3.2 Research Objectives, scope and limits**

Bearing in mind the recent past in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, young bicultural informants were recruited from the present-day CPF, and from the newly established UIEP, both located within the MIL-dominant community. Both institutions instrumentalise MIL in their identities, but each embodies very different political trajectories and characters of governance.<sup>150</sup> Together they offer two real-life reference points in the

---

<sup>148</sup> At any given time, there will also be volunteer teachers who do not speak Totonac; in addition, Totonac-speaking teachers working from Spanish textbooks may deliver the subject in Spanish or engage in continual translanguaging practices.

<sup>149</sup> Schools at Chilococho and Vicente Guerrero and Xonalpu; university at Lipuntahuaca.

<sup>150</sup> Hale (2002) sees a top-down, bottom-up view of agency in RLS as a false dichotomy which obscures the agency of grassroots actors in public policy (e.g. in lobbying for, and in the design and implementation of policy), and the role of state actors in responding to community initiatives. However, in terms of the CPF and UIEP, such shorthand conveys an important, definitive contrast

community from which to hang a narrative of local sociolinguistic change. I entered a reciprocal agreement (discussed shortly) with the governing assembly of the CPF to offer my services as a teacher, in return for facilitating doctoral fieldwork; since the UIEP is a state-funded institution, no reciprocity was agreed although cooperative relationships were formed.<sup>151</sup>

The rationale for approaching this age-group (16-25) is twofold: first, they are bilingual (although most have at least one monolingual parent), and will shortly become the next generation of parents. Given the cruciality of parent-child transmission to language maintenance, research into the language attitudes, beliefs, and practices of such cohorts are of acute interest.<sup>152</sup>

Second, this generation represents a turning point in the community's sociolinguistic trajectory. With very rapid, recent growth in communications infrastructure and education provision, especially in the post-compulsory sector, highly educated MIL bilinguals in this community are gaining increasing access to opportunities for migration away from agricultural lifestyles (among Totonac speakers) to urban professional careers (among Spanish-speakers). In crude terms, language maintenance therefore represents both a badge of honour and burden of responsibility on these informants and their peers.

Young MIL-speakers are no more responsible than any other linguistic group for bearing into posterity their current cultural and linguistic practices. Indeed, what is regarded as 'indigenous' must inevitably be subject to modification and even re-construction: the insights gained from the bicultural's unique position 'inside' a community but crossing and straddling cultural borders, and redefining but not abandoning a concept of indigeneity, is the quality that enables them to interpret and maintain identity despite changing iterations in cultural practice (Gow & Rappaport, 2002).

---

between two iconic institutions in a small community: the first was initiated in opposition to state control; the second (more than a decade later) in accordance with it.

<sup>151</sup> The UIEP stocks the interactive book and talking pens produced at the CPF by the community engagement of this PhD project, and UIEP students have used the resource locally in literacy work.

<sup>152</sup> See for example Kouega's (2008) research into attitudes among young adult speakers of indigenous language in Cameroon.

Relative to local population size, the sample of participants is comparatively large, gender-balanced and generally representative of linguistic (MIL/Spanish) identities of local students.<sup>153</sup> However, it is not intended to be representative of Totonac dialect groups, or social variables such as economic status, religious or political affiliations. The study does not set out to assess or predict the vitality of Totonac but discusses models of vitality (namely Fishman's GIDS and Landweer's IEV models, as discussed earlier) insofar as they aid analysis of language management. The focus and scope of this study remains the analysis of language ideologies in the local environment, the implications of these in terms of the valorisation of Totonac, and the social and linguistic minoritisation of MIL speakers.

To achieve this, this study focuses on detecting ideological trends and patterns, but avoids becoming an exercise of intricate discourse analysis. Occasionally quotations are singled out for closer scrutiny, because they are highly illustrative or contradictory of group perceptions or provide fresh insight or opinion. However, the main objective is to analyse and synthesise a very large volume of qualitative data into communicable form, and to signal recurring patterns, correlations, and inconsistencies of response.

For example, informants are often asked open-ended questions such as 'what happens when public health services deal with a person who speaks Totonac but does not speak Spanish'. Responses are initially analysed according to the semantic content or themes (Thornbury, 2005) and evaluative language (Hunston & Thompson, 2000).<sup>154</sup> Perceptions can thus be situated at approximate points along a scale ranging from largely positive, through fairly neutral, to highly critical. Patterns are seen to emerge, for example that opinion among CPF pupils tends to be less uniform compared to UIEP students, which can then be discussed further.

Responses are sifted again using broad filters of a) ideologies, e.g. attitudes and beliefs; and b) policies, e.g. institutional practices or individual actions and

---

<sup>153</sup> Questionnaires were completed during the academic years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 by 100 respondents, which represents approximately 9% of the young adult population (16-25) of the municipality of Huehuetla, based on local census figures (INEGI, 2011c).

<sup>154</sup> Attitudinal evaluation can be detected in language which (implicitly or explicitly) expresses the attitudes and feelings of the agents (producer, receiver, and wider community) involved in a discourse. Such evaluation can be expressed by various devices, including value-laden or judgemental vocabulary, or the repetition of a given concept, or its collocation within other terms which transfers evaluative connotations to it (Hunston and Thompson, 2000).

behaviours, as discussed in relation to language management, vitality and valorisation as explained in Chapter 1; in addition, the analysis detects examples of c) theorisation, e.g. the rationalisation or explication of the status quo, or hypotheses of alternative scenarios.

The register which informants employ is also observed; for example, many young people make use of discourses of rights in phrases such as ‘they are not given their rights’<sup>CPF2</sup> or ‘they are discriminated against.’<sup>CPF8</sup> Meanwhile, vernacular terms which express the same concepts are noted; for example, ‘they are ignored’<sup>CPF12</sup> or ‘they are turned away’<sup>CPF43</sup>. Such phrasing provides greater definition of otherwise abstract notions and describes how a denial of rights is exercised/experienced.<sup>155</sup>

Finally, the analysis notices when events are simply narrated rather than evaluated. There is inevitably an overlap between all these filters, and the exercise is less concerned with rigid linguistic categorisation and more with extracting a communicable message that encompasses the perceptions of a key generation of young MIL bilinguals from a minoritised language community.

### **3.2.1 Participants, instruments and relationships**

The bulk of data comes from lengthy written questionnaires, modelled on an earlier pilot study in Puebla City among new speakers of Náhuatl, since the emergence of new speakers of endangered languages marks shifting language attitudes and offers potential for language maintenance (Grinevald, 2011). The substantial questionnaire data is supplemented by illustrative quotes and observations from fieldwork, including participatory observation, formal and informal interviews, focus groups, and research conversations.<sup>156</sup>

In terms of language profile of informants, the majority (82%) identify as speakers of MIL acquired in the home, and bilingual in Spanish. Of the MIL speakers, the

---

<sup>155</sup> The superscript alongside anonymised quotes indicates if the informant attends the UIEP or CPF.

<sup>156</sup> Questionnaires were applied in advance of teaching and community engagement to 100 students; 95 were eventually completed, by 47 male and 48 female informants; these attend two institutions (46 high school students aged 16-19 from the CPF, and 42 undergraduates aged 18-25 from UIEP) plus 7 members of the wider community (discussion follows). The questionnaire was lengthy, but many reported enjoying the process and some that they liked writing at length; some fed back that they had continued to talk about the topics with their families; many were pleased that an ‘outsider’ was taking an interest in ‘our language’, a sentiment I believe communicates positive social outlook.

majority (85%) speak Totonac, the minority (15%) speak Náhuatl, and these are mostly incoming students to the UIEP, since the intake at UIEP is drawn from the sierra and beyond.<sup>157</sup> At the CPF, the intake is entirely local, and so their language profile is typical of the immediate locality.

Closer scrutiny of the data, however, suggests that more than 82% of the total informant cohort has MIL present in their linguistic repertoires. One trend is that some informants report not speaking Totonac/MIL but in answers to subsequent questions reveal that family members routinely address them in Totonac/MIL, suggesting they have the capacity and habit of interacting with MIL as part of home language practices.<sup>158</sup> Another trend concerns students from intercultural families, i.e. intermarriage between Totonac and Náhuatl, Otomí, or Mixtec speakers. Despite the plurilingual character of personal networks and family repertoires, they identify as Spanish monolinguals. In the few families where MIL are apparently entirely absent, all except one are in-comers to Huehuetla/Kgoyom.<sup>159</sup>

This detail is important because, first, in terms of methodology, it endorses the value of interrogating key issues - language knowledge, language-use and linguistic identity- in a number of different ways and locations in the questionnaire. Second, it confirms that this study's informants are adequately representative of linguistic identities among young people studying in post-16 education in Huehuetla/Kgoyom.<sup>160</sup> Third, and most importantly, it conveys a sense of the pervasive presence of MIL in young people's home and personal repertoires in this community, in contrast to the absence or exclusion of MIL in the public domains and institutions with which they interact, i.e. education, healthcare, and policing.

Regarding terminology, the questionnaire refers to 'speakers of Totonac' or 'speakers of a language original to Mexico', or gives specific language names. The rationale is to communicate to informants that the research is not about *being* indigenous, but about *speaking* an indigenous language, and about what they think and do, not who

---

<sup>157</sup> At the beginning of fieldwork, the graduating cohort were 85% L1 Totonac speakers, just under the municipal average of 89%; at the end of fieldwork, the newest intake was 100% L1 Totonac-speaking.

<sup>158</sup> This is not to imply or deny they are semi-speakers according to the typology that Grinevald & Bert (2011) posits after Dorian (1977), as this is not investigated.

<sup>159</sup> For example, at CPF, the MIL-rate rises from 81% to 92% when these considerations are factored in; moreover, half the Spanish monolingual in-comers are dependents of a single in-coming teacher.

<sup>160</sup> That is, the 2010 census estimates MIL-use at 89% in the municipality.

they are. MIL cultures have been continually ‘othered’ in their own territories: cognisant that any research exercise has the potential to compound these trends (see Chapter 2.2), this doctoral study has adopted the aforementioned approach to avoid contributing further to such objectification.

In terms of data types, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected via closed or multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. In addition, closed questions are always accompanied by an invitation to reject all suggested options and substitute these with their own, and comments are invited on the nature of the questions themselves.

As an example, in response to the open-ended question ‘What do you think is the best way to describe your linguistic identity?’, the response rate is high and answers lengthy. When faced with closed questions on the same subject (e.g. ‘choose the descriptor which best describes your linguistic identity’), more than half of all informants supplement their closed choices with additional comments.<sup>161</sup>

This apparent desire for precision and personalisation, and to qualify or clarify statements constructed by the researcher, endorses the decision to mix question types and to avoid over-reliance on closed questioning. Given how complex and contentious is the subject matter of identity, and how it is instrumentalised in the distribution of power, the parameters of discussion should be allowed to emerge from informants, rather than be delimited by inflexible methodology or paradigms.

With this in mind, this study substantially engages with qualitative methods, such as open-ended questioning, unscripted research conversations, and interviews and focus groups conducted between peers, rather than with the researcher. Such methods do not eradicate the prejudices of the researcher but attempt to acknowledge the risks associated with highly scripted or conceptually delimited forms of questioning.

Nevertheless, whatever question types are employed, it is inescapable that it is the informants’ use of MIL which has attracted the researcher’s interest. Such interest, even if well-intentioned, potentially adds to the perniciousness of ideologies which view MIL-use as an aberration. Therefore, any inquiry into language-use, typologies

---

<sup>161</sup> CPF = 13/46 = 28%; IRT = 4/7 = 57%; together = 17/53 = 32%; UIEP = 39/42 = 93%; altogether = 56/95 = 59%



of language or linguistic identity should have a purpose that is methodologically useful, ethically justifiable to informants, and transparent, and communicate counter-narratives to harmful ideologies, as this study has done.

Unlike their Spanish monolingual counterparts, MIL biculturals necessarily develop a greater consciousness of linguistic and cultural practices (Hamers & Blanc, 2000), and this additive capacity and receptivity should be exploited. Endangered language research can encompass dual objectives: first, in terms of the local community, an exposition of motives and methods and transfer of information and skills, as a form of consciousness-raising and power-sharing; second, in terms of the wider academic community, to develop what Flores Farfán et al have termed ‘culturally sensitive pedagogies of research methods’ (2009: 206) and methodologies for researching ‘with, and not about, indigenous people’ (2009:207). This facilitates knowledge-enrichment by appropriating ‘the possibilities of epistemologies, worldviews and communicative competencies that differ from those of the Western cultural bases of mainstream social science’ (2009:206).

In this vein, a pedagogical approach has been undertaken: following the initial round of data collection, informants had access to instruction in the theoretical context for the study’s objectives and methods, plus the opportunity to learn and apply research skills through practical experience in an informant researcher team. (IRT)<sup>162</sup> The IRT trialled methods of peer-to-peer research, and this data supplements the main body of results as appropriate.<sup>163</sup> The rationale was to create fora of more authentic and naturalistic expression. Another important source of data was unstructured exchanges or research conversations, where informants contributed their knowledge and theorisation apparently spontaneously. Clearly, my presence had already established a pretext for such behaviours; nevertheless, these interactions are more directed by the informants themselves.

---

<sup>162</sup> After the collection of questionnaire data, the researcher taught a course on language endangerment for final-year students at the CPF, and established an informant researcher team, to study basic research principles and skills, such as gathering, documenting and visually representing data. The aim was to learn by doing, so the team experimented with observing and analysing code-switching behaviours, before gathering data specific to this study (discussion follows).

<sup>163</sup> The Informant Researcher Team (IRT) comprised 10 final-year CPF students; some trialled techniques for observation, and each applied at least one questionnaire with a peer, conducted at least one interview, and participated in or led a peer focus group (results from these are fed into the findings in Chapter 4). The largest focus group was hosted on the CPF campus by the (mainly Totonac-speaking) IRT when the (mainly Náhuatl-speaking) UIEP students were invited to attend.



To illustrate, one day I was watching basketball practice with an 18-year-old CPF student and asked her a mundane question about Totonac that had been on my mind. She answered it and began talking at length on how Totonac differed conceptually from Spanish, e.g. in counting and classificatory systems. I asked if I could start recording her, which seemed to encourage her. She called out to friends and soon a large crowd of girls had abandoned basketball and were debating terminology, e.g. which items were ‘standard’ Totonac and which dialectal variations. Thus, my everyday conversation had become a data collection exercise, in effect, engineered by each party, acknowledging our positionality towards one another and towards the language, e.g. as insider/expert/researched, and outsider/novice/researcher.

Being open to this conversational approach frees the researcher from inflexible methods and allows for an approach where social relations are a little closer to interaction than transaction (Garner & Sercombe, 2009). It minimises the interrogative effect that disadvantages the informant, and approximates more naturalistic interaction (Wagner & Okeke, 2009).

Inevitably there are risks, as well as rewards, with these interpretative spaces: the researcher can selectively filter informant data, so that it exists only in the form of its reception, rather than in the voice of the speaker, tilting the balance of power back towards the researcher (Garner et al, 2006a). All data is susceptible to intermediary interpretation, but such risks are perhaps heightened by ethnographic methods and subjective acts of documentation: from the thousands of words exchanged in a day, my own interpretative filter can typologise everyday interactions as priceless research data.

Moreover, even if more informal and ethnographic methods appear preferable to the artificiality of interrogative interaction, they do not altogether eliminate the observer’s paradox (Labov, 1972: 209); namely, with or without interview script, recording device, or questionnaire (or even the presence of the researcher), awareness of the research context can generate artificial performances (of opinion, language use, cultural habits), rather than a natural, authentic unfolding of interaction and self-expression. Likewise, there may be mistrust and reticence, especially when research is conducted by community ‘outsiders’: research processes do not emerge from an ideological and political vacuum, but rather are contextualised by existing

narratives of the researched community and are often instrumentalised in decisions from which they are excluded (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000).

Meanwhile, structured interviews also carry their own risks: their formality can enhance this performative aspect, and skew power further towards the researcher in the interaction. Additionally, it is not possible, nor should it be desirable, to delimit (perhaps from considerable cultural distance) the precise range of issues upon which informants should comment, or to pre-determine a single optimum method to interrogate these, but an entire project can be jeopardised if conceptual weaknesses emerge in the question design. Therefore, all of the above issues have been taken into consideration in the project design and its methods in order to ensure that such conceptual weaknesses are avoided as much as possible.

### **Reflexivity, objectivity and positionality**

For these reasons, a mix of methods is vital, along with a disposition for critical reflexivity or ‘reflection-in-action’ and ‘reflection-on-action’ (Earley, 2009:106). This means, for example, questioning one’s own assumptions and practices, and whether analysis is borrowing values and concepts acquired in one cultural space and time, and misconstruing these as universal norms. For example, in a multilingual society, nationality and skin colour may be shared between minoritised and dominant linguistic cultures, but not a lifetime’s experience of exclusion or privilege; these contrasts position each party very differently to ideologies of multilingualism, to the policies of the nation-state, and to each other’s identities. A researcher from outside the community faces additional challenges and the need for reflexivity - to identify one’s own relative inexperience and cultural biases - is heightened.

Similarly, this potential to misconstrue mutable concepts as universal norms also extends to the character of what is considered knowledge or data. Indeed, ‘objectivity’ itself has to be understood as simply another situated intellectual construct and site of contention. When gauging what is valid, true, or objective, it is important to recall how a society’s baseline of ‘normal’ sustains vested interests; how apparently unmarked and unremarkable choices consolidate the political ideologies and cultural practices of the dominant. From differing political perspectives, both Gramsci (1972) and Bourdieu (1991) have signaled how

oppression is mundane and pervasive, effectuated in the everyday habits, values, social structures, and conceptual frameworks of dominant social classes (Burawoy, 2012a). As such, the character of the ideologies and policies of the dominant are often less articulated (or recognised), making them at once invisible, hegemonic and apparently unassailable, as if they were natural, self-evident ‘truths’.

However, even if such ideological threads are barely perceptible to those least affected by their stricture, the pressure they exert is still experienced by those subjected to it. In this respect, transformative social movements, such as feminism and civil rights, have raised consciousness of strands of oppression, and signalled how these intersect in the exercise of power. In the same vein, there are no simplistic solutions to reconcile tensions between (shifting) positionalities of the researcher, and constructed, contestable notions of objectivity. Rather it is within such spaces of ideological contention that, as Rescher & Grim (2013) note, the capacity for critical reflexivity emerges as the definitively human quality. Indeed, a humanistic, rather than functional approach is the best a researcher can aspire to (Flores Farfán, 2006). On this personal note, being able to discuss positionality with other volunteers dealing with similar issues, and having to return to the UK periodically, was beneficial in providing physical and conceptual space to regroup and reflect. Being a foreign ‘outsider’ seemed to be also useful (since informants commented on it) insofar as I do not share the cultural and linguistic identity of the dominant national culture, even though I embody a globally dominant social group. For example, in classroom situations we strived to translate directly between Totonac and English, bypassing Spanish, and thereby reinforcing a disassociation of the researcher from national culture.

At the same time, the familiarity and insight gained through extended periods in a small rural location during frequent field trips, spending time inside and outside the classroom with young adults and their families appeared to validate an ethnographic approach, whilst not eliminating its risks. By forming interpersonal bonds, beliefs and practices were at times shared directly with me, rather than only glimpsed (or overlooked) by me, and I believe this proximity enhanced, rather than jeopardised, the capacity for analysis and argument. For example, working at the CPF when it experienced a period of internal crisis brought into stark focus the realities of life in a

community marginalised from state infrastructure, and how a MIL culture must negotiate its community cohesion, security and conflict resolution, and meet its educational and healthcare needs, whilst negotiating linguistic and structural disadvantage. In times of crisis, group identities are accentuated, as people recur to tried and trusted networks for support and cultural mechanisms of self-reliance. In effect, my position as an outsider on the inside allowed me to bear witness to how such mechanisms are deployed and are sustained by language use.

With positionality in mind, a conscious choice at the stage of analysis is to devote considerable space to quotations and paraphrase, intended to mitigate an obscuring of informants' contributions behind my own academic prose (see Chapter 4). There is no substitute for hearing people speak: informants are not only experiential experts of local sociolinguistic situation, but legitimate theorists of the national and increasingly globalised context. Indeed, the positionality and biculturality of informants enhances their construction of theory (Bonilla, 2015), since they are also 'reflective actors who seek to make sense of their experiences in relation to the ideas and experiences of others' (2015:xvi). In a context where others (including the nation-state), are keen to lay claim to MIL speakers' cultural identities (as discussed in Chapter 2.1) it is even more necessary to reiterate this.

### **3.3 Decolonising Praxis**

The problematisation of the relationship between researcher and researched is fundamental to all research activity (Garner et al, 2009). Methods of data collection and analysis of findings are therefore usefully informed by critical reflection not only on the tools and concepts informing the conduct of research, but also on the distribution of independence and equality between research parties - variables which are pertinent to all social relations (Fiske, 1992).

The complexity of all social relationships and paradigms is heightened when colonial constructs underpin their ideological and socio-historical context. Indeed, Mallon (2012) even fears a recolonisation of local knowledges and cultures through academic research processes. Therefore, decolonising praxis suggests more than a

sifting of ideologies and policies encountered in a post-independence context, and must include the mindset and conceptual tools with which it is approached.

Moreover, it means going beyond questions of procedural conduct during fieldwork, to include the formation of critical consciousness, in both parties, concerning the distribution of power before, during and after an academic exercise, and contingent action. Informants invest time, energy, knowledge, analysis, relationships and even their own resources in a research process which may not transfer back any benefit to them, or at least, not as individuals or to the same degree as to the researcher. Even on an intellectual level, it has been noted that very little anthropological research is translated and offered back to the individuals or communities who were the objects of study (Warren & Jackson, 2002:3).

However, the same process affords the researcher social and economic capital in the form of academic qualification, employment or enhanced professional status, publication, access to funding streams, experiences of travel, and further learning. In turn, these benefits attract others, such as financial credits, mortgages, cultivation of cultural habits which further reinforce or enhance social status and networks of privilege.

Bearing in mind this trajectory, it is illusory to conceptualise the identity of the researcher and nature of research as objective, or to view these in abstraction from the vested interests of dominant classes (Burawoy, 2012a); rather such positionality and personal profit has to be acknowledged and articulated, so that theory and practice can be deconstructed and resources purposefully reoriented towards pursuing the collective needs and interests of dominated classes (Burawoy, 2012b).

Research proposals in general, and in sociolinguistic fieldwork specifically, tend to be couched in terms which reference the wider good, using current buzzwords which appeal to funder institutions (Flores Farfán, 2006). However, without fundamental change of praxis and engagement with structural inequalities, such discourses can simply function in sustaining and consolidating asymmetrical relationships of power between the objects and subjects of research. To take the argument further, the privations or injustices experienced by particular groups are valuable commodities

on the academic market, as careers and privileged lifestyles are in effect underwritten by the marginalisation of others.<sup>164</sup>

With themes of skewed privilege in mind, my research project has aimed to follow a more transformative process, informed by participatory action research (PAR) which has previously been conducted in the northern highlands of Puebla. PAR methodologies problematise inequities perceived in the local environment and aspire not to neutrality in the relationship with marginalised communities, but solidarity, whilst maintaining academic rigour and objectivity in the treatment of data. Both Mexican and foreign researchers have pursued methods informed by PAR since at least the early 1970s (e.g. Fuentes, 1983; Almeida, et al., 1983; Almeida and Sánchez 1989).

Furthermore, PAR practitioners seek local participation and democratic decision-making as a means of knowledge acquisition and social change (Greenwood and Levin, 2007:153). A key criterion is that the PAR researcher has identified local experiential experts (Greenwood & Levin, 2007:30) who both inform the research process and become informed by it. In this way, the process helps to develop local agents of change, whose engagement with the community can continue beyond the lifetime of the original project and departure of the researcher.<sup>165</sup>

In the case of this study, it does not represent itself as solely an exercise in PAR; nevertheless, it learns from PAR and contributes to debate by framing the conduct of PhD research within the context of a reciprocal exchange, with specific outputs via community engagement. These actions are not incidentals or distractions from the PhD project, but a fundamental ideological premise for its conduct.

---

<sup>164</sup> This argument is echoed in Mufwene (2005) who also perceives a self-serving character in the discourses of the endangered language research industry.

<sup>165</sup> Discussing the agents, spheres, and objectives of social change and research, Kemmis (2008:137) offers a revised definition of critical PAR as conscious, self-critical, collective, situated, informed, didactic, prudent and communicative intervention for socially transformative ends of equity and well-being. Simplistic notions are avoided regarding the constitutive character of key social agents, the nature or scope of the agency of each, and borders between agents. This echoes Hale (2002) who, without overlooking social injustices where they arise, cautions against conceptualising falsely rigid binaries of government/grassroots or mestizo/indigenous in respect of language rights and multiculturalism. Such nuance and complexity is also communicated by young bicultural informants in this doctoral study, who, it will be seen, can identify and deconstruct minoritising practices without situating themselves and others in stark juxtapositions as social agents.

The teaching, training and publication which accompanies this PhD has three discrete objectives: first to conform to the local Totonac cultural norm of reciprocity; this functions both as a structuring principle of social relations (what might be termed EM or equality matching relationships, to borrow from Fiske (1991:691), and as an operator of identity, since conformity with reciprocity is an important cultural marker distinguishing local Totonac from national linguistic culture. Reciprocity can be said to connote integration into a collective ‘self’ or shared socio-cultural and ethical identity (see Govers, 2006; Patiño, 2008), by shifting EM interactions further towards CS or communal sharing (Fiske, 1991:690) relationships.

A second objective is to instrumentalise the research process as an opportunity for transformative action, namely supporting local Xish activists with capacity-building interventions (training, access to resources, contacts). Indeed, when dealing with endangered linguistic cultures in a post-independence context, research should always be conceptualised as opportunity for transformative practice and positive social and linguistic outcomes (Flores Farfán, 2006; Garner et al, 2006b).

A third motivation is to acknowledge the lifetime benefits to the researcher and to collaborate with local agents in the pursuit of similarly enduring outcomes in the researched community. Therefore a key component of the method has been to provide consultancy and material support to a language maintenance caucus named *Xtachuwín Kinkachikinkan Xa Akgtutu Nakú* [the language of our home / people of three hearts] based at the CPF and comprised of students, teachers, parents and supporters, in its production of a mainstream, commercial text.

As part of this community engagement, a trilingual talking children’s storybook (*Tsikan chu Nipxi’ / Buri and the Marrow / La viejita y la Calabaza*) was published in association with UK educational publishers Mantra Lingua in 2014 (see Appendix 1). It constitutes the first mainstream publication in Kgoym Totonac, and launches the publisher’s ‘endangered languages series’ of children’s books. In the UK, the book has also been used with local schoolchildren, while in Huehuetla/Kgoym, UIEP and CPF students have used it with siblings, parents and in the wider

community.<sup>166</sup> On the one hand, it supports literacy and language revitalisation, and on the other, serves as a promotional tool.<sup>167</sup>

---

<sup>166</sup> As a self-contained undertaking with themes interconnecting with this study, its production process will be written up as a series of academic articles following submission of this thesis.

<sup>167</sup> Flores Farfán (2006) comments that ‘the commitment to bring “tangible benefits to those [endangered] communities, such as the production of material in an otherwise evanescent language”, is an enormous challenge, and one that is rarely articulated from the perspective of the researchers themselves [...] it relates specifically to empowering endangered communities to reverse language shift - a situation which researchers as “activists” (and vice versa) need to deal with, because of the ever-present risk of perpetuating, rather than interrupting and contesting, or even transforming, unequal power relationships, which are manifested, for instance, in the asymmetric organisation of using two or more languages’ (2006:79).



### 3.4 Conclusion

The literature has recalled that the object of endangered language research is the three-dimensional person, with lives unfolding during and after the research process, and not some abstract data resource to be mined (Freeland, 2010). This doctoral study does not wish to function as an extractive industry, but rather to problematise the distribution of power, knowledge, theory, skills, and material benefits in the research process. As discussed in Chapter 1, norms of reciprocity, collectivity and resource equity are claimed as cultural identifiers by a range of indigenous groups in the Americas, including Totonac culture, and are integral to *buen vivir*. This research seeks to reciprocate the integration of local knowledge and analysis into wider theory, assisting local experts to gain access to the wider theory, knowledge, and material resources of the academy.

In the chapter, a thread can be traced between the social injustices of ideologies and policies endured by speakers of Totonac in their local context (or rather, the consciousness-raising around these injustices), the mobilisation of Totonac farmers, the formation of the OIT and alliance with non-Totonac political structures, to gain greater leverage over their situation or cultural control, and meeting the public-service needs of the linguistic culture, including educational.

In education, it was not only the exclusion of the Totonac language which communicated the culture's minoritisation, but the imposition of a homogenous curriculum regardless of context, the poor quality of provision, the exercise of discrimination and disparaging attitudes, which culminated in Totonac protest and organising an alternative. At the new school, Totonac identity was not only articulated through language use, but by a vindication of cultural attitudes, belief systems, and mechanisms for mutual support, interpreted as forms of school governance and curriculum, seeking to enhance rather than jeopardise their capacity for self-reliance. Notably, it was not only a positive Totonac social outlook, but timely popular and political organisation which proved crucial in accessing services from which speakers had been marginalised. Nevertheless, the recourse of national political culture to co-option of popular local organising (and even strategic violence) is a pattern familiar to many contexts.

With these antecedents in mind, this study has conducted inquiry into young people's perceptions of language management in the current-day, and established an ethical and methodological framework within which to carry out its study. If critical, reflexive practice necessarily questions dominant assumptions, and asserts that academic objectivity is also a construct situated in time and space in intimate relation to the distribution of power, this does not mean that everything is relative, and nothing can be asserted. Rather, it is the experience of minoritisation and marginalisation (or relative distance from the apex of power and baseline of accepted cultural norms) that lends vital insight into prevailing socio-economic order. The positionality of non-dominant groups facilitates the deconstruction of hegemonic ideologies and ideologies, facilitates decolonising praxis, and perceives 'truths' which more apparently 'objective' observers may fail to grasp.

## **Chapter 4 Ideologies and policies of MIL: analysis of findings**

### **4.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, language ideologies and policies are theorised by young people studying in the Totonac-speaking rural town of Huehuetla/Kgoyom. The analysis concerns notions and perceptions of linguistic identities, the valorisation of MIL, and language management in the local environment, specifically in relation to education, healthcare, and policing. A particular theme is the relationship of these to language minoritisation and sociolinguistic order. The aim is to convey a sense of the implications of otherwise abstract concepts for the embodied speaker and their well-being. The focus are arenas of public services that have been sites of acute political contest for the linguistic culture (Chapter 3). Substantial space is given to verbatim testimony as well as synthesis and interpretative analysis. Filters of language ideologies (attitudes, beliefs and notions), and language policies (practices or behaviours) are employed to process a considerable body of qualitative data into a digestible narrative of continuity and change. Elements pertinent to other cultural contexts and debates beyond the specific domains of these findings are highlighted for further discussion (in Chapter 5). For example, the literature views valorisation of endangered languages as strongly implicated in their vitality; in this chapter, the analysis is extended to social processes which correlate the valorisation of MIL with the well-being of MIL speakers.

At the beginning of the thesis, it was argued that just as the concept of language minoritisation (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012) lends itself to considering how a language can become endangered even when its speakers numerically predominate, so it offers a lens through which to view the social marginalisation of a language community. It was also argued that language ideologies and policies should be deconstructed to detect the evocation or exercise of harm – situated on a continuum of structural and personalised violence – since this represents the ultimate means of intangible social control. Specific insight is therefore gained from local theorists with experiential expertise into the dynamic function of language ideologies and policies in the distribution of social power. In the analysis of findings, therefore, it will be seen that issues of language management and endangerment are indivisible from questions of language valorisation and minoritisation, and more importantly, from the well-being of embodied speakers.

## 4.1 Linguistic identities: perceptions and policies

‘If the language is lost, all that will be left in our region is the memory; what will people say then? That once, over there, in that region, that’s where the Totonacs once lived?’<sup>UIEP40</sup>

‘all the languages there are in the world, every single one of them should be respected as equal, they shouldn’t be discriminated, [they] shouldn’t stop us from speaking them. We don’t know all the other languages there are in the world, we can’t say anything about them because we don’t live in them, we must show them respect. My language is one of the languages situated in the world we live in, maybe you don’t know much about my language, I’m going to tell you....’<sup>CPF 32</sup>

---

As discussed in Chapter 3, this study’s informants are representative of young people (16-25) studying in Huehuetla/Kgoyom in terms of the range of linguistic identities.<sup>168</sup> Among the Totonac-speaking informants, at least one parent is usually Totonac-monolingual; for almost all informants, everyday language-use inside and outside the home includes an active or passive interaction with Totonac, as well as the use of Spanish. For the Náhuatl-speaking informants, who are studying locally but living away from home, current language patterns may differ, but include the use of MIL with peers locally and with family in their home environment. In other words, MIL have had a pervasive presence in the lives of informants, even if they have been largely absent in key public institutions with which they interact.

In terms of a linguistic identity, informants are asked to choose a descriptor from a range, which best describes their perceived fluency in each language. The

---

<sup>168</sup> The 2010 census estimates MIL-speaking population locally at 89% (INEGI, 2011c). However, municipal figures for the 16-25 age group are not given. As discussed in Chapter 3, the incidence of MIL bilingualism among the cohort of informants to this study is likely to be higher than the 82% initially suggested (from 2% to 10% higher, depending on mode of analysis) because of a tendency to under-report it, a phenomenon discussed in these findings. In addition, this cohort includes transient populations who tend to be Spanish monolinguals and may not have been counted in the 2010 census. These are in-coming students whose parents have come to work as school-teachers at the CPF or UIEP, and in-coming students to both institutions. Therefore, the informant cohort is illustrative of the linguistic identities of young people studying locally. The UIEP informants are a random sample and do not necessarily reflect the language distribution across the whole UIEP student body; nonetheless, what can be concluded is that MIL diversity is increasing in Huehuetla/Kgoyom due to this new presence of (Náhuatl-speaking) UIEP students.

questionnaire deliberately does not discuss the term ‘indigenous’ as a social identity (see Chapter 3), but informants are asked to comment on the use of this term in the 2010 census (see later in this chapter). However, some informants themselves volunteer language-use as a marker of social identities:

‘our language is our identity; it is an essential part of us, our most important cultural characteristic. We have other cultural traits too, which distinguish us from others. Our language sets us apart, in some ways; it shows the way we were brought up, our values and our social development’. UIEP22

Instead, the questionnaire makes a detailed interrogation of linguistic knowledge, skills, domains, networks, interlocutors, purposes, and resources, with reference to the informant and their parents and family networks. All but one of the younger informants, and more than half of the older informants, supplement their choices with detailed comments to clarify their skills. For example, one states that: ‘I am bilingual in Totonac and Spanish, I understand and speak both languages, but I am most fluent in Totonac,’ UIEP 30 while another comments that ‘I speak, understand and write in both languages but my Náhuatl is more passive than my Spanish.’ UIEP5

This care for precision and personalisation can be interpreted as indicative of engagement with the topic. A similar proportion that believes they express themselves better in MIL (43%), believes they express themselves equally well in MIL and Spanish (41%). Across the entire cohort, only 16% consider their language skills are better in Spanish, a finding which is discussed further in Chapter 5.

In terms of how the language is referred to (e.g. *totonaco*, *tutunakú*, or *tachuwin*), informant focus groups suggested that sometimes conscious linguistic choices are made by Totonac speakers (who they regard as ‘militants’), to ‘make the name of the language ‘sound’ or ‘look’ more ‘indigenous’, that is, more phonologically and orthographically distinct from the usual Spanish transliteration.<sup>169</sup> Such conceptual distancing from Spanish might be examples of what Fishman (1985:85) terms the ‘stylistic artistry’ of *Ausbau* (after Kloss, 1967); that is, actions and attitudes which

---

<sup>169</sup> Informant PG-CPF. Such variation can also be juxtaposed with efforts at standardisation as part of literacy education, such as the agreements of a Totonac language standardisation commission in Veracruz in 2003 (Masferrer, 2009). These were published as ‘*Acta de Acuerdos para la Sistematización de la Escritura de la Lengua Tutunakú, Comunidad de Sabanas de Xalostoc, Coxquihui, Veracruz, 23-25 de octubre de 2003.*’

accentuate the independence, rather than interdependence, of a language that it is under threat from another in a language contact situation. It therefore suggests that ideological and political pressures exist in the environment to encourage speakers to stress the distinctiveness of a linguistic identity.

In terms of linguistic identities, perhaps an interesting starting point is the succinct answer by one of the minority of Spanish monolinguals to the question ‘What do you think is the best way to describe your linguistic identity?’ The informant replies ‘I have no linguistic identity.’<sup>UIEP40</sup> As meaningful as it is brief, it communicates the ideological context in which the cohort operates: this informant ‘only’ speaks Spanish, and hence does not consider they have any linguistic identity of mention. This Spanish monolingualism has become normalised, regarded as universal, meaning the inability of a 21<sup>st</sup>-century Mexican to speak an autochthonous language of the territory has become an unmarked, unremarkable, uninterrogated, unnoticed, ubiquitous norm. Consequently, only those persons whose language behaviours stray from this norm are regarded (or regard themselves) as having a linguistic identity. Even in a MIL-stronghold such as Huehuetla/Kgoyom, the cultural and linguistic hegemony of the national identity project (discussed in Chapter 2) can be perceived.

The more typical response from the few Spanish monolinguals in this cohort is to offer an explanation for their identity: ‘My mother tongue is Spanish because I don’t know how to speak Totonac, **but** [bold mine] my parents are Totonac or speak the Totonac language because my grandparents speak the language.’<sup>CPF22</sup> In this way, the informant creates a conceptual link between ‘being’ Totonac and ‘speaking’ Totonac, while the use of ‘but’ signifies a nexus between their own sociolinguistic identity and that of their elders.

In fact, the intersectionality of language skills, identity, and interrupted inter-generational transmission, are issues explored further by other informants. One explains: ‘even though most of my family is tri-lingual, they didn’t teach me any of the indigenous languages they know.’<sup>CPF30</sup> In fact, during discussion with this informant, it becomes clear that he does interact passively with both Totonac and Náhuatl, and others might consider him bilingual, although he does not adopt the label himself.<sup>170</sup> His family’s patterns of language management mean that he

---

<sup>170</sup> See Garcia 2009; Hamers & Blanc 2000.

responds in Spanish to parents and elders, even though they use MIL amongst themselves. As a result, he lacks confidence and/or capacity in spoken MIL and reports having felt marginalised by Totonac-speaking peers at school.

The detail of his linguistic situation had come to light during focus group discussions on progression to university. Some universities ask whether a candidate speaks a MIL as criterion for accessing maintenance grants used as incentives for the recruitment of ‘indigenous’ students. Although both of this informant’s parents are MIL-speakers, his capacity in MIL does not correlate with the social and linguistic identity of his family unit. He reported feeling disadvantaged by such a linguistic selection criterion and resentful.

His case is a reminder of how both personal perceptions of language capacity, and the institutional use of language capacity as a marker of social identities, are problematic and need to be deconstructed. It is interesting to situate this case alongside that of another informant, who is a new speaker of Totonac and Náhuatl, with no known family heritage of MIL. By contrast, he describes himself as ‘a passive bilingual’, saying he hopes his learning ‘counts for something,’ and that it would be ‘a privilege to be able to communicate in them.’<sup>UIEP 6</sup> In other words, a language deficit is viewed quite differently when MIL are acquired as additional languages, which in turn implies there are distinct social, affective and economic motives and repercussions for the speaker. Perceptions of self, and perceptions of the regard in which they or their capacity is held, are sensitive topics for informants. Interestingly, another informant who speaks only Spanish in effect depersonalises such issues by constructing a narrative that places their language deficit into broader, socio-historical perspective: ‘My linguistic identity, as far as I’m concerned, is that I am a Mexica, whose tongue was cut out, and another one put in its place, one which doesn’t belong to me.’<sup>CPF36</sup>

As far as the overwhelming majority of MIL/Spanish bilinguals are concerned, a pattern emerges which, to an extent, appears to distinguish the Totonac and Náhuatl speakers. In general, both are clear about their linguistic identities; however, Totonac bilinguals more often qualify their language statements. For example: ‘I don’t speak Totonac fluently but I do understand it very well, I find it hard to speak it perfectly’.<sup>CPF2</sup> Such reserve or lack of confidence is more often communicated by

Totonac speakers regarding both Totonac and Spanish language skills. In contrast, the Náhuatl/Spanish bilinguals tend not to convey this hesitancy about either language.

As far as Spanish is concerned, one factor behind such reserve may be that the Totonac speakers are younger and still at school (at CPF), meaning their Spanish grammar and literacy are still the subject of formal evaluation. For example in a later discussion of human rights and language use, one CPF student comments that those who speak Spanish fluently should not have any more rights than those who speak Totonac, since: ‘maybe it’s hard for us to learn Spanish, or we don’t pronounce some words very well, but we are still learning and that’s why we have classes and we are just developing our skills.’ CPF32

As will be seen in the chapter on education, even at age 16-19, there is still an anxiety among students about achieving fully expressive proficiency in Spanish, especially in spelling, grammar and pronunciation. By contrast, the Náhuatl speakers are older and have already entered higher education (at UIEP) and arguably have already affirmed their bilingual proficiency. Meanwhile, any deficit in Spanish language skills, actual or perceived, would have far-reaching consequences for young Totonac speakers, meaning targeted research is required and suitable responses developed (see discussion in Chapter 5).

Also relevant are the responses informants give when asked to list any disadvantage for their personal or professional lives associated with speaking a MIL, when they reiterate this anxiety that, when speaking Spanish, L1 interference (e.g. accent), would betray them as native speakers of Totonac, and expose them to discrimination. This observation is returned to in Chapter 5 in discussion of the sociolinguistic minoritisation of MIL speakers.

Regarding skills in Totonac, there is also a perceptibly greater reluctance among Totonac-speaking informants to adopt terms such as ‘fluent’. Almost all have been raised in Huehuetla/ Kgoiyom; notwithstanding, their skills in Totonac are more often qualified or clarified. For example: ‘I hardly use my Totonac language because quite a few of my friends don’t know how to speak Totonac; so that’s why I’m chatting a lot in Spanish.’ CPF45 In other words, when asked to evaluate their skill, informants instead describe their range of language domains and interlocutors. In so doing, a



conceptual relationship between language skill and language use is expressed. As another explains: ‘I speak Totonac, but to say I speak it well or express myself well, I’d say no, because I hardly speak it; with my classmates it’s always in Spanish, or with my cousins and nephews and nieces; I only use it with my parents and grandparents and others.’<sup>CPF1</sup>

The apparent dichotomy of Spanish-use with peers and MIL-use with elders is of interest in terms of Totonac vitality. A trial observation of language behaviours among informants, conducted by the Informant Researcher Team produced contrasting results.<sup>171</sup> These confirm young people’s MIL-use with elders, but suggest that, for example, on the often long walks home from school with their peers, and once in the home domain, informants are continually translanguaging with peers and younger siblings, and are as likely to speak in Totonac as Spanish. This small trial does not provide generalizable evidence; nevertheless, it does suggest that further investigation is worthwhile before assuming a simplistic binary of MIL-use with older generations and Spanish-use with younger.

In practice, multiple linguistic identities are routinely performed according to specific communicative purposes in particular domains, meaning that young people in effect become situational ‘Xmen’ or ‘Ymen’, to use terminology from GIDS (Fishman, 1991). For example, informants might be teasing one another in Totonac at the bus stop, but once aboard, will switch to the dominant, normative linguistic practice of the domain, i.e. use of Spanish. Similarly, other communicative forms may also be managed, for example, restraint in body language, facial expression, or volume of speech.

In this way, even though a bicultural person has a range of repertoires at their disposal for inter-group and intra-group behaviours, in given contexts s/he might be perceived by an external onlooker as conforming to only one set of behaviours (for example, a stereotype is constructed of discreet verbal and physical expression among Totonac speakers). Discriminatory stereotypes of Xish identities might be less related to Xish cultural and linguistic norms, and more indicative of responsive

---

<sup>171</sup> The IRT (see Chapter 3) experimented with peer observation to remove the presence of the outsider researcher and gain access to peers’ language-use in the home and domains outside school.

behaviours in situations of language management, and even of behaviours associated with social or linguistic minoritisation.

Meanwhile, even the very recent insertion of new social media into young MIL speakers' lives is not necessarily inhibiting the use of Totonac among young bicultural peers. On the contrary, the sudden explosion in cyber cafés and mobile phones has created unforeseen media and purposes for reading and writing in Totonac, with implications for MIL literacy and perceptions of its validity.

For example, a routine exchange of text in Totonac in public spaces, such as internet cafés, may be interpreted as a form of solidarity coding, similar to observations by Hill & Hill (1986) of Náhuatl-speaking workers in a Spanish-dominant domain. With a not dissimilar rationale, an informant to an IRT focus group reports that:

‘I write Totonac in Messenger, to ‘chat’ [...] just to have a laugh, [...] I don’t mean proper stuff, serious stuff [...] but yes, fool around with my mates, especially in a public internet café, so the people around you don’t know what you’re writing [...] we use abbreviations [...] we don’t really have any trouble understanding each other [...] it just takes a little time to write everything ... sometimes I’m chatting to my mate and he’s in the same internet café as me [...] Sometimes he might even be at the next machine! [...] but if it’s something really personal’ ...<sup>IRT</sup>

In this case, informants using Messenger to chat are also highlighting that any problem of lack of knowledge or consensus around spelling in Totonac is largely eliminated, since the software tool lends itself to phonetic spelling and abbreviations. This function of social media tools and implications for MIL text are shaped by the location and purposes of such interactions, namely outside the linguistically-regulated domain of education and for the purposes of authentic peer-interaction, and is noted in literature on the emergent use of MIL in social media. For example, regarding Facebook exchanges in Maya, Cru (2015) notes that: ‘their spontaneity and non-prescriptive language usage ... reflect orality, even if literacy is central, ...social media represent a mirror of the actual linguistic repertoires that users, in this case youngsters, deploy in their daily informal communicative behaviour where, in traditional sociolinguistics terms, code-switching and codemixing are the norm rather than the exception’ (2015:288). In other words, the increasing insertion of social

media tools into the lives of Totonac speakers in Huehuetla/Kgoyom is placing the management of MIL text back into the hands of young MIL speakers, after having been a highly limited skill and resource.

During the lifetime of this single, time-bound thesis, the consequences of rapid change in local communications infrastructure cannot be addressed but only signalled. A clear motor of recent change has been the construction of the UIEP campus, which has required enhancements in a full range of communications: roads, electricity, cabling and satellite dishes, mobile networks and internet signals. When fieldwork began, only the very highest peak in the centre of the municipality could receive a mobile phone signal, few businesses had private landlines, and there was one public payphone in the municipal town centre. A proportion of homes was (and remains) off-grid, and most homes are unconnected to the limited but steadily expanding road network. Communication between informants usually meant travel on foot to meet in person. At the time of writing, former informants from some of the least physically accessible communities routinely use social media on the CPF and UIEP campuses. More importantly, although Spanish is used on social media such as Messenger and Facebook, Totonac and Náhuatl are not excluded from their use.

In other words, the use of MIL text among young people is accompanying the spread of communications infrastructure and tools. In this community, the primary obstacle to increased use of MIL with social media tools is arguably as much an economic as linguistic issue: the costs of a smartphone/network contract/access in a cyber-café are all disproportionate to people's cash incomes. On this point, the free, largely constant access to computers and internet, which both the CPF and UIEP offer, are important resources and opportunities for fostering MIL literacy.

On the question of MIL literacy, only a minority of informants (37%) reported feeling as confident about writing in MIL as in Spanish. Notably, less than half were also unequivocal about writing in Spanish (43%). Moreover, there is a higher incidence of unclear, unspecified or undecided responses regarding literacy (in either language), than for other topics, especially among Totonac speakers.<sup>172</sup>

---

<sup>172</sup> Hence the significance of the community engagement associated with this PhD research (discussed in Chapter 3), which involved the production of a talking storybook as a literacy tool for local use

Moreover, the opportunities offered by social media for MIL text and literacy skills development are relevant to the question of informants' perceptions of linguistic identities, because these values are bound-up with self-assessments of language skills, in terms of proficiency, range, use, and usefulness. In simple terms, when it comes to MIL, 'people who speak them, value them, and respect them.' CPF21

On this point, one informant does not appear concerned by his (perceived) skills deficit in Totonac since, in his view, he doesn't need it in his daily life: 'I can't say I speak Totonac 100%, maybe it's more like 50%, because in reality my parents didn't teach me it, because I was born in the city of Puebla and they got me used to speaking Spanish from when I was little, but when I came here I learnt by myself, because I just listened to everyone around me speaking Totonac, but I don't think I need to speak in Totonac.' CPF 18

Of particular interest is that, despite his acquisition of Totonac once the family returned to the MIL-stronghold, 'I don't think I need to speak in Totonac.' This comment highlights the sometimes contradictory nature of language practices and perceptions of identities. In Huehuetla/Kgoyom, all public institutions use Spanish and it is perfectly possible to live, be educated, employed or run a business, attend church, and raise a family without any knowledge of Totonac; indeed more than 10% of the population identify as Spanish monolingual.<sup>173</sup> Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in fact the informant did have a substantial need (and opportunity) in his social and affective life to acquire Totonac; otherwise, it does not follow that he would have done so to such an extent. In addition, this informant's contribution recalls the important phenomenon of recovery of linguistic and cultural heritage on return to a MIL stronghold, (see Patiño, 2008). Indeed, among new arrivals from other cultural backgrounds, the strongly evident Totonac linguistic culture encountered in Huehuetla/Kgoyom sometimes provokes profound reflection. For example, one UIEP student compared the local context to her own:

'where I live, no-one speaks a mother tongue any more .... How come we all have all these mother tongues, but we only speak Spanish? ... Here [Huehuetla/Kgoyom] it's less urbanised, and that's an important point. There, it's all about the urban model and getting away from your roots ..... no-one is interested in where you

---

<sup>173</sup> Census data, INEGI (2011a)

come from, what you belong to, what language you speak, it's just about urbanisation, creating a city, everything has to be urban, and that's why we're losing the language, isn't it' <sup>174</sup>

Similarly, the space which Totonac linguistic culture occupies in the local environment provokes others to reflect on their own linguistic identities and on MIL acquisition. As one informant states: 'I only speak Spanish but I would like to learn Totonac and be bilingual so I don't feel like the odd one out amongst people who speak two languages.' <sup>CPF27</sup> Another mentions she would like to learn Totonac because 'it's really useful, apart from the fact that I feel bad and I feel ashamed when they ask me if I speak Totonac and I have to say no'. <sup>CPF30</sup> More usually, competence in Spanish is associated with language pride (see Messing, 2005, 2007); for example, during an IRT focus group, another UIEP student remarks: 'where I'm from, discrimination is absolute ... it's a Náhuatl area. If someone goes to the city, they come back speaking Spanish. Because if you speak Náhuatl, if you mention Náhuatl, it's marking you out as poor, but if you turn up speaking Spanish, it means you've 'made it'. I think everyone thinks the same way everywhere, don't you?' <sup>175</sup>

This finding of young Spanish-monolinguals feeling at odds among a Totonac or MIL-speaking majority is therefore interesting. Myriad contexts can result in a young person having to negotiate other linguistic cultures and identities not initially their own; however, it is less well documented that this phenomenon occurs in relation to Totonac/MIL. More importantly, it serves as a reminder that minoritisation is a linguistic and socio-political process which is mutable and contingent in nature, rather than an inevitable outcome of language contact or proximity.

---

<sup>174</sup> IRT debate

<sup>175</sup> IRT debate

#### 4.1.2 Determining identities: MIL speakers and the census

To situate ideologies of language and official discourses of linguistic identities, it is useful to refer to the concepts of the most recent census, as discussed in Chapter 2. In 2010, the Mexican census formulated the following question on social identities: ‘in accordance with your culture, do you consider yourself indigenous?’ The question, which was additional to others on language-use, was not applied nationally, but only to a sample of communities that INEGI (2011c) had previously identified as pertinent.

Following reflection on the outcome of the first round of data collection, this census question was included in the second edition of the research questionnaire, not directed at informants, but rather as a stimulus for discussion on social identity, and to gather critical responses to the census question.<sup>176</sup> Informants are asked how they would have answered the 2010 question, and whether they wish to comment on the nature of the census inquiry or on issues of ethnic descriptors and determinants of social identities.

All informants respond to the first question; the majority provide full answers, as well as to the supplementary question, suggestive of a high level of engagement with the topic. Just under a fifth indicates that they would reply ‘yes’ to the census question, whether or not they object to its premise or wording. Meanwhile, four-fifths answer ‘no’, regardless of their linguistic or cultural heritage. Instead, they raise concerns which span a range of themes: from a lack of precision or clarity inherent in the question, through objections to the language and its colonial associations; to its perceived purposes of racial profiling; and ultimately its consequences for personal objectification and human rights considerations. Such issues are often summarised and referenced by informants simply as ‘discrimination’.

First, the term *indígena* is repeatedly rejected as a lexical item and social category. For example, one informant considers the census question to be fairly typical, but would not describe themselves as indigenous because ‘that’s a classification that was implemented after the arrival of the Spanish. But I do believe I am an inhabitant of the first nations (*pueblos originarios*).’<sup>UIEP18</sup> Despite its use in official discourses

---

<sup>176</sup> That is, the UIEP cohort of 42.

by indigenist institutions such as INALI, the term '*indígena*' remains closely associated with the historic term '*indio*' (Indian) among informants: 'I am '*Originario*' and not '*indígena*' the term indigenous for me is discriminatory, it emerged after the encounter of the two worlds, because they thought they had arrived in India.'<sup>UIEP1</sup> Both terms are regarded as misnomers and legacies of conquest and colonial subjugation: 'The word '*indígena*' has been wrongly used to refer to a person from an original culture of Mexico. '*Indígena*' refers to persons from India; unfortunately it was used because when they discovered America they thought it was India.'<sup>UIEP32</sup>

In strictly semantic terms, *indígena* does not entirely equate to *indio*, meaning that it could be argued that these informants are operating under false assumptions. However, in practice, the young people's interpretation of the term in this manner is entirely accurate, as it confirms an enduring conceptual correlation between the two notions. From a historical and sociolinguistic point of view, the use of such denominators marks the beginning of two critical and enduring social processes: on the one hand, the erroneous, unnecessary, and ill-intentioned classification of peoples encountered in the Americas by *conquistadores*; on the other hand, a profoundly destructive process of colonisation and exploitation.

That informants interpret *indígena* in this manner implies that ideologies conducive to such interpretation persist. By implication, either recent attempts to realign the discursive connotations of *indígena* still have substantial ground to cover (not least amongst persons most implicated in its social meaning), or else the attempt itself may be misguided. This point – the discursive construction of contested identities – will be returned to in discussions in Chapter 5; however, at this point it can be argued that there is no mistake in the informants' assumptions. That is, the same persons who are being 'classified' by the nation-state into discrete social groups have accurately identified the harmful colonial origins (and enduring character and purposes) of such an exercise.

In addition, the concise, interrogative style of the census question appears to exacerbate, rather than assuage, the impact of the term '*indígena*': 'I don't think it's the best way to ask someone, it's almost always a discriminatory act. Why not just

ask: ‘do you have a culture?’ or ‘which is your culture and language?’ UIEP29

Informants reiterate that the term ‘*indígena*’ can cause offence to the person being surveyed and suggest that ‘more thought should be given to the terms they use to refer to first nations.’ UIEP4 In addition, informants put forward the view that the question is regarded as unpleasant and should be modified: ‘The question is too direct, and you discriminate against people by talking to them in this way; even while you are causing offence you still hope they will say yes.’ UIEP29 Even among those informants who answer ‘yes’ to describing themselves as ‘indigenous’, there are warnings that the question ‘can appear offensive to many, unless they have good information about its purpose. In Mexico it contains meanings of discrimination and racism’. UIEP17 There is a suggestion that ‘the word should be modified; it is used for, and very much associated with, discrimination. I think it’s important we really do get to know what people’s opinions are, so that it will help us have a deeper understanding of the word “indigenous”’. UIEP24

Second, the census question asks respondents to decide if they are indigenous ‘in accordance with your culture’. The collocation of the term culture alongside indigenous, and the assumptions and rationale which underpin such a form of questioning, are contentious themes outlined briefly in the contextualisation of MIL in Chapter 2. The ideological bases and social meaning of such a question are worth further exploration in Chapter 5; however, at this point some revelatory responses can be noted.

Some informants appear to readily accept the question’s premise, which locates identity within a collective social experience of family and/or community: ‘yes, I grew up in an indigenous community;’ UIEP7 or ‘yes, I belong to an indigenous community, my parents are indigenous, and I value my culture.’ UIEP12 Others specifically reference language-use as a function of culture and ethnicity and signifier of identity. For example, one notes that: ‘my family is indigenous, and we speak the indigenous languages which are spoken here;’ UIEP25 while another explains: ‘I think what this question means is, are you descended from an original culture, do you speak an indigenous language?’ UIEP30



Language-use can be a source of pride in terms of identity: ‘All I can say is I am proud to belong to the Náhuatl mother-tongue;’<sup>UIEP12</sup> and language-use interconnects closely to informants’ locale: ‘I belong to a Totonac culture and my mother tongue is Totonac, so I identify [as indigenous];’<sup>UIEP14</sup> ‘I would say [I am indigenous] ... I live in a rural community where people are trilingual, so my family are too, even though we are located in part of the Totonac homeland.’<sup>UIEP10</sup>

‘Culture’ is therefore often referenced by informants alongside language, and the relationship of these two elements to indigeneity is asserted: ‘As far as I’m concerned, I consider myself indigenous because I am from a community where the whole society speaks the Totonac language, and apart from that my family has inculcated in me the culture of my community.’<sup>UIEP9</sup> Specifically, it is the cultural content associated with language that is formative and summative of identity: ‘my linguistic identity is seen in my language use, my dress, my habits, but most of all in my cultural perspective, which is reflected in the way I am, and the way I behave in my environment. In a word, it is my greatest wealth, my legacy.’<sup>UIEP20</sup>

MIL-use therefore implies not only perceptions of linguistic identity, but also behaviours, attitudes and perceptions of the environment: ‘Totonac is our culture, a way of explaining why life exists, who we are, what role we have on earth. It’s a different way of seeing the world.’<sup>UIEP32</sup> An expanded linguistic repertoire brings alternative perspective and additional cultural expertise: ‘speaking two or more languages means having two distinct panoramas, perspectives from two different worlds.’<sup>UIEP8</sup> In other words, the informant theorises the increment in cognitive and cultural competence which the literature terms additive bilinguality (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Indeed, this capacity of enhanced insight provides a premise for this thesis investigating the attitudes of MIL bilingual biculturals.

Others also note these intellectual aspects when deconstructing culture and linguistic identity, in comments such as: ‘I understand the Náhuatl worldview;’<sup>UIEP5</sup> and ‘I consider myself indigenous because our understanding goes far beyond scientific knowledge;’<sup>UIEP33</sup> or by observing that ‘I belong to an original culture of Mexico, so I know about the past and how things have continued evolving.’<sup>UIEP32</sup> Linguistic and social aspects of culture are still referenced: ‘I speak the language and take part

in the cultural activities of my community.’ UIEP5; 32 Culture includes aesthetic, moral, and ritual practices: ‘To identify as an indigenous person involves many aspects of culture; language is one of them, dress, customs [values] and traditions, that’s what is contained in being considered indigenous.’ UIEP27

For one informant, indigeneity is a genetic inheritance: ‘I consider myself indigenous because my grandparents were and my blood comes from them,’ UIEP42 while for another, the issue is not so much what is inherited as ‘whether you actually practice [it]’ UIEP41 Although beliefs and behaviours are also regarded as part of the definition, UIEP33 it is external elements which, as informants observe, make them vulnerable to social discrimination, specifically ‘the way a person dresses and speaks’. UIEP33

Following on from this, other informants perceive a need for tighter definitional clarity and are sceptical of the ideological paradigm of the question. For example, one observes that s/he has ‘mixed’ heritage and believes that: ‘I think I have some characteristics which in my opinion classify me [as indigenous] .... they should take into account other characteristics apart from language and dress.’ UIEP6 ‘For another, being indigenous has quite specific meaning: it involves ‘belonging to an ethnic group, being in touch with the land, with nature.’ UIEP35. Moreover, another agrees to describing themselves as ‘indigenous’, but believes: ‘I think we all are, we all belong to a culture.’ UIEP23 Finally, an informant notes that: ‘I am indigenous: saying that means I accept my own culture, and if we accept it, it means we have to know what our roots are ...we have to define the word indigenous, what is the concept it contains, and whether we, as the people who actually make up the first nations, whether we have the same concept of it.’ UIEP26

In other words, findings suggest that definitions of the term ‘indigenous’, as employed by the nation-state, are not settled with the very persons whose subjectivity is implicated in the term. Appropriateness of terms may be evaluated differently by informants, but of more importance is that descriptors and definitions are not perceived as originating, in nor determined by, the very persons they are supposed to reference. Therefore, the first priority, as the latter informant states, is to seek to understand how communities actually perceive and describe themselves in their own terms. For example, regarding dress and identity, one observation is that none of the informants, with occasional exceptions, wears the traditional dress of their linguistic

culture. Western dress among young MIL-speakers is a cultural norm largely triggered by local integration into the public education system, and, outside the MIL-stronghold, by the normative practices of a Spanish-speaking meta-culture.

Second, in terms of language and identity, a minority of informants do not feel able to describe themselves as native MIL-speakers, despite having MIL-speaking parents, because of intergenerational disruption of MIL; moreover, a more substantial proportion lack confidence in describing themselves as fully proficient bilinguals. As discussed in Chapter 2, the domains and purposes of MIL-use are also delimited and demarcated. Therefore, there is a need to scrutinise the conceptual correlation of elements such as dress or language-use with notions of culture and identity, and the relationship of all these elements to determinations of indigeneity.

In other words, informants are calling attention to the conceptual incongruities inherent in the interrogation of identities by the census and reiterating the potential harmfulness of notions it employs. *Indígena*, as a subject of the nation-state, does not conceptually or socially equate to self-ascription as a member of a Totonac or Náhuatl community, or even as a speaker of a MIL. Rather, it is a socio-historic subjectivity, which can be contextually realigned or manipulated for specific ends – by both parties, as one informant observes: ‘sometimes we only say we are indigenous to try and get access to more opportunities from the government. Other times we are ashamed of our ethnic identity.’<sup>UIEP8</sup>

So far, the data has raised a variety of discussion points on the polemic of contested identities in post-independence contexts, their imposition by national or supra-national institutions, or self-ascription by individuals and communities. If focus is maintained on the specific concerns raised by MIL-speakers in response to the census question, it is possible to set parameters for a discussion in Chapter 5, in which a limited number of pertinent issues can be explored (such as the purposes of defining indigeneity), in terms of their pertinence to a reduction of harm or promotion of well-being among individuals and communities whose lives and livelihoods (as well as languages) are at risk.

Meanwhile, many informants suggest the use of more neutral language:

‘[indigenous] is a discriminatory term; there are other terms like ‘ethnic group;’”

<sup>UIEP13</sup> which another explains to mean people living together as a society or

community, who conserve their particular culture, beliefs, and above all, use their own language: ‘In my own case, I would not say I am indigenous, rather that I am from an ethnic group because the word indigenous for me is used for making discrimination in society.’ UIEP36 There is a suggestion to use the word ‘autochthonous’ because it implies ‘belonging to a pre-Columbian culture ... a culture original to this place.’ UIEP20 Indeed the term ‘original’ or ‘First Nation’ is the preferred choice for most: ‘I don’t consider myself indigenous, but rather the inheritor of an original culture, which my family belongs to and into which I was born;’ UIEP4 ‘I would say I originate from a community, or I consider that I am an original of ...’ UIEP3 Otherwise, the specific name of their linguistic culture is referenced: ‘I am part of a first nation [*pueblo originario*] because I identify with the language and practices and customs of the Nahuas.’ UIEP8

In other words, the negative associations of the term ‘indigenous’ are perceived as inextricably linked to its socially divisive function. Again, despite being prepared to describe herself as indigenous, one informant argues that: ‘the word seems like a pejorative expression to me, like being ‘in’ or ‘out’ of something.’ UIEP28 In fact, use of the term in the census appears to trigger scepticism towards the underlying objective of the interrogation: ‘for me it’s a term which does not fit, because it makes a separation between people, like a classification, but we are all equal human beings.’ UIEP15 Contrast between the third and first persons is used to underline such anxiety: ‘because they ascribe these terms to us, I think they are using education to trick us into saying that some are indigenous, and others are not; naturally we are all different human beings.’ UIEP31

In fact, such distinctions are considered misleading: ‘we are all originals of a particular place we belong to .... Indigenous is a word which we, people from first nations, use incorrectly – we all have antecedents.’ UIEP2 Ultimately, the use of this notion is considered harmful: ‘let’s get rid of this idea of indigenous, that distinction they make ends up being discriminatory’. UIEP3 13 In the final analysis, such ‘false’ notions are employed for divisive purposes, and the skewed distribution of power: ‘Yes, [I am indigenous], we are all indigenous. Another thing, they classify us by skin colour; no-one was ever born with blue blood as far as I know, tell me if I’m wrong...’ UIEP22 Such comments are powerful in bringing focus onto the ideological paradigm that contextualises an interrogation of identities by the census, at the same

time as they recall how abstract concepts (such as dichotomies of social identities) are divisive in real terms and the cause of pain. Informants reiterate the lingering impact of colonial processes of personal objectification, in which subjectivities become negated or distorted across time and space, threatening personal well-being and social harmony, with a potency that stems from its deeply embedded character.

Notwithstanding these concerns, findings also show that such distaste at the census question is by no means universal. A distinct perspective is that it has positive socio-linguistic purposes, specifically the defence and maintenance of MIL: ‘we need to know how many people speak them’.<sup>UIEP39</sup> Moreover, it is believed that ‘the census helps to keep preserving the cultures there are in the communities, as well as in the institutions and schools, so that original languages are not lost.’<sup>UIEP11</sup> Indeed, several informants welcome the census question as indicative of the nation-state’s commitment: ‘It’s important to know the percentages of the languages [MIL] because that way they can find out which ones are in danger and do whatever they can to save them.’<sup>UIEP9</sup> One informant who is happy to answer that they are indigenous believes: ‘it is good if they ask this type of question because this way we can find out if people are ashamed of their own culture.’<sup>UIEP35</sup>

Perhaps a final point to note is that, in response to the census question, only one informant chose to answer that they are not indigenous, but rather *mestizo*. All other respondents, whatever their linguistic or cultural antecedents, either accepted or substituted the term with a preferred concept. That is, all but one of the informants sought to close the conceptual gap between their own (linguistic, cultural, or ethnic) identity, and the identity of a person whom the nation-state considers autochthonous.

Therefore, even though this study does not claim informants are representative of all young MIL speakers, these patterns of response clearly signal the need for careful consideration of discourses around identities amongst young people. Attitudes towards linguistic and cultural diversity, and the discursive reconstruction of a Mexican national identity within a context of MIL revitalisation, are themes that are therefore revisited for discussion in Chapter 5.

---

### 4.1.3 Valorising MIL: concepts of linguistic rights

With these issues in mind, more opinions were elicited from informants, to piece together a more complete picture of their own sentiment towards MIL and perceptions of their valorisation in the wider environment. Across the cohort, whether L1, L2 or non-speakers of MIL, the predominant avowed sentiment is pride. This is not unexpected, given their linguistic identities, the MIL-stronghold in which they reside, the educational institutions they attend, and the researcher effect, all of which contribute to such positionality. Nevertheless, it is the meaningful differences of opinions between informants and nuances of perspective that ultimately reveal important new data for both academics and activists concerned with MIL maintenance.

Opinions were tested indirectly using a range of stimuli and closed and open questions (as has already been discussed in Chapter 3). The foci of questions reflect indicators of language valorisation suggested in the literature (see Chapter 1), such as the significance of Totonac/MIL in constructing personal and social identities; their utility in personal and social networks; and their appropriateness and validity for urban lifestyles with new technologies and professional careers. In terms of data, it is the individual comments of informants that communicate meaning more than raw statistics. However, a very meaningful figure is the high proportion of informants (87% overall) who volunteer additional comments when not required to so; an even higher proportion comply when required, meaning a very large body of qualitative data is available for analysis.

One theme which emerges is the value of MIL as distinctive, historic, cultural and ontological patrimony. For example, referring to Totonac, one informant notes: ‘it is unique to our people,’<sup>CPF28</sup> while another reiterates: ‘our ancestors fought not to lose it and now it’s our turn to rescue the language and not to abandon our own roots.

<sup>CPF12</sup> Notions are repeated of a continuance of historic struggle, and of responsibility as contemporary conservators or guardians. One argues that Totonac ‘comes from a pure ancestral source’<sup>CPF13</sup> and must not be allowed to die; another says it must be conserved ‘because it is the inheritance we were left ... Totonac was spoken before Spanish even existed and that’s why we have to preserve it’.<sup>CPF4</sup> Indeed, for some, MIL gain in stature relative to Spanish because of their provenance: ‘original

languages are worth more because they are pre-Hispanic and they are more part of our national heritage than Spanish'. UIEP29

Although the Mexican Republic is only just over 200 years old, the antiquity and autochthonous qualities of MIL have become implicated in its existence, assigned values as markers of a distinctive, contemporary national identity: 'It's what identifies us as a country,' UIEP40 'it's what makes Mexico, unique.' UIEP15 Furthermore, 'we have to conserve what makes our country different from the rest,' IRT2 which is defined by another as 'Totonac and our customs.' CPF17 Use of the term 'customs' is significant here because it carries additional meanings among Totonac speakers, which do indeed demarcate and distinguish the linguistic community's attitudes and behaviours which are collectively termed 'the custom.' As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, norms of reciprocity and social obligations are definitive of Totonac linguistic culture and thus are also arguably endangered by encroaching mestizo culture.

Perhaps contradictorily, given the above, MIL and Totonac are nevertheless claimed as national patrimony: 'they are part of our culture and national identity' CPF36 declares one informant, while another extends the argument by claiming: '[Totonac] is a language from Mexico; if you don't love an indigenous language you don't love Mexico.' CPF3, 177

Meanwhile, other comments focus on equating Spanish and Totonac as linguistic equals: 'it should have the same value as Spanish because it is our language, our identity as Totonacs.' UIEP35 There is a reminder that 'Totonac is a language too'. UIEP39 One informant explains precisely: 'Totonac is not a dialect or 'tongue'; it's a language, according to Article 162 of the 'General Law of Linguistic Rights'; CPF26 while others add: 'it's an official language', UIEP17 and 'we have valid linguistic rights in Mexico'. UIEP13 These comments are perhaps testimony to recent state-supported campaigns to raise awareness not to refer to MIL as dialects, and to disseminate knowledge of new linguistic legislation.<sup>178</sup> Either way, the sentiment is that Totonac should be 'valued just the same as Spanish.' IRT2 Indeed, it is argued, all languages,

---

<sup>177</sup> An observation during fieldwork was that students at the CPF were rehearsing for a regional competition in marching with the national flag, a routine in all state schools which had not usually been performed at the CPF. They had decided they must 'show the authorities that indigenous people love the flag as much as anyone else,' and not allow 'that accusation to be thrown at us'.

<sup>178</sup> See Chapters 2 and Chapter 5.



MIL or otherwise, should be regarded as equal <sup>UIEP1</sup> and none regarded as more valid than any other <sup>UIEP14; UIEP26</sup> so that ‘everyone has the right to keep using their own’. <sup>UIEP1</sup> Notwithstanding, there is a reminder that ‘unless it is actually put into practice and made the same as Spanish, nothing is ever going to change, it’s just something they make speeches about.’ <sup>UIEP31</sup>

Asked if MIL speakers should make more of an effort to learn Spanish to obtain the same rights as Spanish speakers, a minority agree, believing that to defend one’s rights, the use of Spanish is indispensable: ‘Unfortunately we live in a place where there is a lot of inequality, which is why I think it is useful to learn to speak Spanish well in order to defend yourself.’ <sup>IRT4</sup> Another explains that they may not agree with the situation, but ‘this is the reality we are living in, at least in this country. If we want to defend our rights, we must learn to speak Spanish.’ <sup>UIEP28</sup>

Both these comments are interesting in so much as their focus remains the exercise of rights, but without directly accepting or challenging the ideological premise of the question. Instead, their approach might be characterised as reluctantly pragmatic. In a similar vein, it is the ubiquitous use of Spanish that provokes others to discuss acquisition of Spanish: ‘nowadays Spanish is used more, and lots of people don’t know how to speak it; so it’s important for indigenous people to be able to learn a little.’ <sup>UIEP36</sup> Although no support is voiced for abandoning MIL, different motives for acquiring Spanish are voiced: ‘I agree Totonac should continue as a form of communication, but I also think that learning Spanish is indispensable; it would help them to have better opportunities in their social environment day to day.’ <sup>UIEP24</sup>

By contrast, when one informant reflects that: ‘indigenous people must conserve their Totonac language and also learn the Spanish language, so that they don’t feel discriminated,’ <sup>UIEP19</sup> this arguably approximates the premise of the original question, intentionally or not. To some extent, this is also reinforced by arguments for bilinguality: ‘Totonac and all the other original languages, as well as Spanish, are official Mexican languages; but whatever original language you speak, you should speak Spanish too.’ <sup>UIEP17</sup>

Most often, however, the fundamental premise of the original question is directly addressed and challenged. A range of themes emerge: first, it is argued that concepts



of civic and human rights preclude any consideration of linguistic or social markers: ‘I don’t agree, because whether you are dark- skinned, light-skinned, tall, thin, etc. we are all the same, and I don’t believe that for speaking Totonac anyone has fewer rights than those who speak Spanish; of course that is not true, we are all equal before the law, so that’s not right, no-one should be discriminated against, and least of all because of their language.’<sup>IRT5</sup> Therefore, if someone does not speak Spanish, it does not follow that his rights can be denied, because ‘we all have the same rights, whichever language we speak.’<sup>CPF27</sup>

Second, all languages are considered equally valuable; therefore ‘Totonac and Spanish have the same value.’<sup>UIEP27</sup> No single language or linguistic culture should be privileged over another: ‘there is no language which is superior to any other;’<sup>UIEP29</sup> ‘speaking Spanish doesn’t make you bigger than anyone else.’<sup>UIEP4</sup> Moreover, no language should be imposed upon other groups: ‘that’s globalisation, they just want to teach them so they can sell something to them.’<sup>UIEP33</sup>

Third, there is frequent reference to legislation and the nation-state. Informants argue that the Mexican Constitution conceptualises rights in the same terms understood above and translates these into law: ‘we are all equal before the law;’<sup>UIEP1</sup> ‘we are human beings and as humans we have rights, as the Constitution clearly sets out.’<sup>UIEP26</sup> More specifically, ‘Article 2 of the Constitution states that Mexico is a multicultural country;’<sup>UIEP8</sup> and that ‘we all have the same rights, indigenous and non-indigenous.’<sup>UIEP12</sup> Instead, it is observed that ‘if they are interested in speaking Spanish, each indigenous person can learn;’ but to oblige anyone to do so would be ‘violating the rights’<sup>CPF12</sup> of MIL speakers. Indeed, Mexican law is believed to afford specific protection: ‘the law says you cannot discriminate against indigenous people,’<sup>UIEP34</sup> because ‘in Mexico, we all have the same rights and responsibilities.’<sup>UIEP40</sup> Furthermore, ‘there are agreements and treaties, apart from human rights, which sustain our rights.’<sup>UIEP6 8</sup>

Finally, from a philosophical or ethical perspective, it is argued that all people are free; hence MIL- speakers possess the freedom to make their own choices about the

languages they speak or learn. Put simply, ‘they can’t make us speak Spanish if we don’t want to.’ <sup>CPF3</sup>

Whichever the arguments concerning legislation and linguistic rights, informants articulate the fear that MIL are sometimes considered less appropriate for contemporary society by their own community: ‘many indigenous people want to give up on the Totonac language; they say that language belongs to the past, that’s what people say.’ <sup>CPF14</sup> Indeed, despite two Totonac-speaking parents, the informant cited believes he speaks better Spanish than Totonac, meaning there may be some relationship between this assessment of skills and their rationalisation of language utility.

By contrast, there are counter-arguments that reaffirm the agency of contemporary speakers of MIL in determining their valorisation and vitality: ‘we are the ones who give it value,’ <sup>CPF3</sup> notes one informant succinctly. Another explains further: ‘I don’t think the language will be lost; moreover, they say it’s ancient but that has nothing to do with it, whether or not our ancestors spoke it, we speak it; and if we want to speak it no-one can criticise us.’ <sup>CPF6</sup> This conceptual break with the past and emphasis on the current-day is especially interesting. In discussions of valorisation, informants’ comments that ‘we have to feel proud of our mother tongue’ <sup>CPF35</sup> and ‘never forget our roots and still less be ashamed, because that is what gives us our identity’ <sup>IRT4</sup> are empowering and motivational. At the same time, discussion (in Chapter2) suggests there are potential risks to the vitality of MIL if they are overly associated with the historic past and legacies.

However, other informants insist Totonac will not be lost: ‘I’ll keep on speaking it forever’, <sup>CPF7</sup> in order to ‘demonstrate that we are indigenous and unashamed of our language’. <sup>CPF10</sup> In other words, language-use does not simply channel communication between speakers, but can serve additional purposes, such as claiming conceptual space for linguistic and social identities. The term ‘demonstrate’ connotes recurrent and interconnected themes within responses; namely language shame or pride and the use of MIL in public spaces. Public and private space in an intensely rural and subsistence community may differ from other contexts (see discussion in Chapter 2); nevertheless, it is reasonable to infer that a ‘demonstration’ of MIL implies its use in contexts where MIL speakers would otherwise tend towards Spanish or silence.

Meanwhile, the greatest concentration of highly pejorative comments emerges in response to the suggestion that the loss of MIL/Totonac might simply be indicative of modern progress and development. The range of language and nuances of perspectives provide valuable data and insight. For example, terms which are considered offensive in Mexican Spanish are used (such as ‘stupid’,<sup>UIEP 15</sup> ‘ignorant’, ‘naïve’,<sup>UIEP17</sup> and ‘absurd’<sup>CPF42</sup>) to characterise the suggestion, in stark contrast to the highly positive terms employed to discuss bilinguality: ‘being bilingual is always enriching, one enhances the other without taking anything away; both enrich you with knowledge.’<sup>UIEP4</sup> The general sentiment is that bilinguality is additive to progress, rather than subtractive: ‘that’s not the way to progress: if it really were progress then people would learn to use two languages’.<sup>CPF24</sup>

A minority lament the alleged correlation of societal progress and MIL-loss, without challenging its premises. For example, some fear that ‘knowledge is being lost,’<sup>CPF20</sup> and feel they must act: ‘just because we are making progress as a country, we shouldn’t allow Totonac to be lost’;<sup>CPF19</sup> ‘the Mexican people should step up and make sure it isn’t’;<sup>CPF24</sup> ‘every single one of us should carry on and make sure it is not lost.’<sup>CPF7</sup> In this vein, ‘we shouldn’t forget our roots,’<sup>CPF 2</sup> and must ensure that, ‘even if it belongs to the past, we have to keep on speaking it, so that the Totonac language never dies.’<sup>CPF 3</sup> In other words, there is a belief that modern-day Totonac speakers bear responsibility as curators or conservers of a cultural and linguistic heritage. In the final reckoning, action is the measure of sentiment: ‘if we really respected Totonac we would do something to make sure we do not leave it in the past, we would keep on speaking it and recover what we can.’<sup>UIEP33</sup>

The majority, however, reject the statement’s fundamental assumption of a mechanistic relationship between economic development and MIL loss. First, the reason MIL are being lost is not technological, but social: ‘Speaking two or more languages enhances linguistic diversity in the country. But lamentably it is being lost because of the dominance of Spanish and the discrimination that goes on towards indigenous cultures.’<sup>UIEP13</sup> Second, any obstacles to societal progress are not perceived as linguistic: ‘just because we used to speak it then, it doesn’t mean we couldn’t make any progress, it doesn’t mean we were stagnant; that’s like saying the language was an obstacle and I don’t agree with that.’<sup>CPF</sup>

Neither is there agreement that times were indeed harder when Totonac was more widely spoken: ‘Yes, Totonac is a language of the past, but not of hard times; we are not losing it because we are making progress as a modern country, but because the rest [other Totonac speakers] should be speaking Totonac more; yes they should speak Spanish now and again, like at school for example, but at home they should conserve Totonac and speak to their parents in Totonac.’<sup>CPF4</sup> In other words, connections are reiterated between individual actions and collective consequences, and between home language use and language maintenance.

The informant’s reference to the ‘rest’, meaning other Totonac speakers, is also interesting. Although the questionnaire does not indicate where the stimulus opinion originates, the informant assumes it comes from within the community, as do others. For example, another associates such opinion with a lack of Xish consciousness: ‘those people don’t know what they are saying, they don’t know they are losing themselves in the process.’<sup>CPF6</sup>

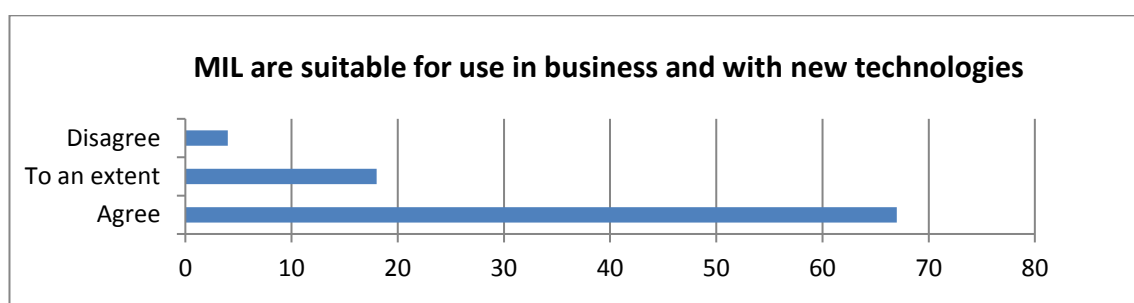
Fellow speakers are encouraged not to assume cause/effect between modernisation and Spanish: ‘even if we are progressing as a country, that doesn’t mean we have to leave the Totonac language behind;’<sup>CPF43</sup> and ‘we can still progress even if we speak another language.’<sup>CPF46</sup> Indeed the issue is not even economic progress per se, but rather one of loss of identity and cultural abandonment: ‘if we’re losing the language it’s not because we’re progressing, it’s because most people want to be like the Spanish, and that’s no good.’<sup>CPF45</sup>

Meanwhile, the basic premises of the statement are challenged. First, the assumption that the country is indeed advancing: ‘actually, we are not even making progress as a country’.<sup>CPF11</sup> Next, language abandonment is rejected as a valid indicator, ‘because making progress is not the same as forgetting your origins; so we are not actually growing, we are going backwards.’<sup>UIEP41</sup> In addition, there is rejection of an equation of technology with progress: ‘I am proud to be Totonac and to say I belong to the culture of Three Hearts; by contrast, technology is something which doesn’t contain any meaning.’<sup>CPF12</sup> Another takes a more philosophical view and believes that ‘modernisation is just passing, it just lasts for a time; but an indigenous language is our identity.’<sup>CPF38</sup> Indeed, taking a long view of Totonac identity is regarded as a narrative that is reiterated in Totonac linguistic culture (Stresser-Péan, 2009).

At the same time, all the above comments can be said to open, rather than close the conceptual space between a sense of one's identity, and the tools of the environment, valorising the former above the latter.

On this theme, one of the stimulus opinions on language valorisation concerns the use of MIL with technology. As figure 4.1.1 indicates (below), there is in fact majority support for the view that no inherent incompatibility exists between MIL and their use in business or with new technologies.

**Figure 4.1 shows support among the cohort for the use of MIL in business and with new technologies**



In this vein, the assumption that the use of technologies, economic progress and abandonment of MIL are inevitably linked is one that some informants clearly reject: 'Every day we are modernising more with technology but that doesn't mean we have to give up our languages.'<sup>IRT 6</sup> Likewise, processes of modernisation do not, by virtue, necessitate abandonment of MIL. 'We won't become modern by forgetting it [Totonac].'<sup>CPF35, IRT4</sup> Rather, progress can continue apace because 'the loss [of Totonac] and the country's development have nothing to do with each other.'<sup>IRT</sup>

Instead, there is an enthusiasm for expansion in the range of skills associated with MIL-use: 'children should be taught not just to speak it, but to read and write it too, so they don't lose their culture.'<sup>CPF 15</sup> More specifically, technology and professionalisation should not be regarded as incompatible with MIL-use: 'the country making progress has nothing to do with whether or not people use indigenous languages; I'm not going to abandon my mother tongue just because I get educated and become a professional.'<sup>CPF16</sup>

Informants offer reminders that in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, MIL speakers already do business in MIL: ‘for example in shops and other places.’ <sup>CPF40</sup> Perhaps for this reason, there are comments that it seems ‘obvious’ that ‘we can do anything we want in our language so long as we can handle it well,’ <sup>CPF33</sup>, and a reminder that ‘you can use Totonac on the internet’, <sup>CPF23</sup> with one informant offering specific examples of MIL-use with technologies: ‘we can use Facebook, e-mail, chat in Totonac or in Náhuatl, broadcast on the radio and speak on a cell phone or message each other in these languages.’ <sup>UIEP30</sup> For most informants, MIL and technology is more an issue of extending conceptual boundaries, rather than negotiating linguistic limitations: ‘every language can adapt to technological advances; I don’t think Totonac is counterpoised to technology.’ <sup>CPF36</sup>

Moreover, as a point of principle, MIL should have presence on the internet so that ‘it is not only English and Spanish which take priority ... MIL are also taken into account’. <sup>CPF12</sup> In an age of virtual profiles and platforms, ‘we have the right to see our original languages gaining a profile using whatever means is available to disseminate them.’ <sup>UIEP3</sup> Potentially, the use of MIL with technology ‘could encourage speakers of this language [Totonac] to take an interest in technology’. <sup>UIEP39</sup> Finally, ‘everybody has the right to use new technologies and forms of communication;’ <sup>UIEP25</sup> because access to technologies ‘is not a privilege but a right which we all have as human beings.’ <sup>CPF18</sup>

Notwithstanding, a minority consider that combining MIL with the internet or new technologies is an abstract or even futile notion. On a practical level: ‘very few people speak Totonac and no-one would understand it.’ <sup>CPF42</sup> Meanwhile, on a political level, such proposals are naïve: ‘the purpose of trying to homogenise language use is to gain control over the population, so it [the idea] doesn’t suit them.’ <sup>UIEP33</sup> Presumably, ‘them’ refers to the apparatus of the nation-state; in the next comment, the opponents are clearly specified: ‘this utopia is a dream because people who make technology are not interested in indigenous languages, only hegemonic languages.’ <sup>UIEP31</sup>

A rare objection is that the integrity of MIL could be undermined: ‘the technical terms used in technologies, the internet and businesses modify original languages.’ <sup>UIEP28</sup> In the RLS literature, there are examples of objections from

language purists to such modification or neologisms (see Hill & Hill, 1986); among this study's informants, however, they almost never emerge, and as discussed earlier, some informants are already engaging with new technologies, social media and Totonac/MIL.

Nevertheless, the greatest de facto accelerator of MIL-loss among this generation appears to be out-migration on completion of education to urban areas. As one acknowledges: 'we are also losing the language because many people don't speak it any more, once they go to the city they learn Spanish and forget all about their mother tongue.'<sup>CPF22</sup>

Whether young speakers move into skilled or unskilled occupations, MIL are never normally the media of communication in the professions, and often do not even circulate informally in the workplace.<sup>179</sup> Nevertheless, a caveat is added to the explanation that young people abandon MIL as they enter their professional lives. Although some may 'prefer to speak Spanish for questions of work or study', they still maintain MIL-use 'with their own people; and that's where people get their valorisation of a language from'.<sup>UIEP28</sup>

Bearing this comment in mind, two important considerations emerge as important future research challenges: first, the maintenance of affective social networks and a defined community with whom to interact in MIL following migration, i.e. what one informant terms 'their own people'. Second, the potential impact of the UIEP specifically and the Intercultural Universities generally, in stemming or accelerating rates of out-migration from MIL-strongholds, and in validating MIL for academic and professional purposes, by providing the infrastructure and pretexts to do so.

#### **4.1.4 Conclusion: ideologies, identities and young MIL biculturals**

In conclusion, it is the disposition of young MIL bilinguals to theorise and reflect on their experiences, and to contribute their personal expertise, which has allowed such a range of elements to emerge in these findings on identities, rights, and language ideologies. Together with the analytical process, they reveal how complex, multi-layered, and inter-dependent are notions central to processes of language maintenance, loss or minoritisation, for example, language valorisation. As the

---

<sup>179</sup> without negating the use of MIL between workers in certain peri-urban contexts; see Hill & Hill (1986)

literature predicts and the data affirm, valorisation of language, as with any cultural process, is constituted and communicated within a range of ideologies and policies, interconnected to both enduring and dynamically changing beliefs and behaviours in the wider environment. Valorisation, it is seen, is implicated in far more than an apparent embarrassment at the use of MIL in public. Indeed, one argument of this thesis, based on its findings, is that such sentiment may better characterise the eye of the beholder than the mouth of the MIL speaker.

Social processes continually interconnect in reproducing or reconstructing a range of values associated with Totonac and MIL. These include notions of their inherent intellectual value, for example as vehicles which convey and conserve cultural ontologies, or indeed facilitate or impede technological advance. Similarly, they include beliefs around the worth, in a post-independence and globalised society, of the identities they signal, and their potential to undermine or uphold notions of national unity or distinctiveness. Likewise, their relevance in young people's lives is evaluated, in terms of accessing social or professional aspirations, and the costs or benefits of bilinguality

For this reason, informants' perspectives have readily moved between themes of the personal and the political, the specific and the general. Processes of linguistic valorisation are recognised distributing social power, and ultimately impacting upon the vitality of MIL: 'Speaking two or more languages enhances linguistic diversity in the country. But lamentably it is being lost because of the dominance of Spanish and the discrimination that goes on towards indigenous cultures.'<sup>UIEP13</sup> It seems that for some, value-shift in regard to MIL appears almost unobtainable. At the same time, the delicate inter-dependency of external processes and internal responses on which valorisation depends could leave processes of value-formation vulnerable to unexpected disruption. For example, technological and infrastructural change is accelerating penetration of Spanish-speaking culture into the lives of young MIL speakers in Huehuetla/Kgoyom; yet, these same processes are also expanding the communicative purposes, domains and audiences for MIL text, with perhaps less predictable implications for MIL valorisation. In other words, as the physical and virtual environment of young MIL speakers changes, so too might perceptions shift of the social and personal utility of MIL.



Such perceptions are also importantly shaped by the educational institutions that speakers attend. The UIEP and CPF, which buck national trends of Spanish monolingualism, are regarded by informants as exercising key functions in the development of MIL capacity (such as Totonac literacy) and positive valorisation of linguistic identities. This reminder of the power of education to maintain or diminish the vitality of MIL and to shift the values of a generation is why the first of the three chapters that follow on perceptions of language management in public institutions explores the key domain of education.

Finally, patterns can already be detected in the volume of responses analysed so far and will be detectable again in the sections which follow on language management in healthcare, education and policing. Specifically, two broad philosophical perspectives are emerging, almost equally distributed among informants, and a third underlying pattern in the form of response.

The first pattern is a perspective that states or implies that, whether or not prevailing language attitudes and beliefs are problematic, they are potentially sensitive to variation; in other words, ideologies are ultimately contestable. To this end, when reacting to perceived threats to the vitality or valorisation of MIL, informants are as likely to upbraid their own communities, as they are to challenge the wider Spanish-speaking culture.

A second pattern is a perspective wherein, if beliefs are viewed as problematic, they are also explicitly or implicitly characterised as more inevitable or less mutable. This rather pessimistic, deterministic view suggests less scope exists for envisioning altered values than does the first perspective; nevertheless, this position does not negate the scope for debate between a divided cohort on how best to negotiate the realities of their current situation.

Indeed, on this point, a third pattern can be detected underlying both these perspectives. Whichever the philosophical stance of the informant towards contestability, the content of their answers is often skewed towards the account, narration, and rationalisation of problematic language policies, and towards description of actual or hypothetical strategies of response. In other words, only a minority of informants speak of problematic ideologies and policies in abstract terms alone, or only posit the need for value-shift in society.

To some extent, this skew in the content functions to resolve the tensions generated by an apparent divide between informants' interpretational perspectives. Put simply, whether unhelpful, unjust, or harmful language ideologies and policies are viewed as contestable or immutable, MIL speakers still need to problem-solve the everyday language situations they encounter, and to retain a sense of agency in the process. Therefore, if pragmatic responses predominate, rather than abstract or ideological answers, it is testimony to the resourcefulness of informants and their communities.

Finally, only 4% believe their own views coincide with prevailing sociolinguistic ideologies. Instead, there is near consensus that their positive valorisation of MIL is substantially counter-cultural. Whether or not this perception is reliably indicative of the current ideological climate, it is a true self-assessment of their ideological positionality relative to others. It remains to be seen whether this foretells a fruitless challenge for MIL maintenance activists, or whether it offers the hope of a new, younger generation with a positive mind-set towards MIL maintenance and a disposition for MIL revitalisation. In the meantime, however, the body of findings so far offer invaluable insight into young MIL speakers' current valorisation of MIL and perceptions of language management in the local environment.

## **4.2 Language ideologies and policies: language management in the wider environment**

### **Introduction**

RLS research on language management in education (discussed in Chapter 1), has focussed on discourses and policies which erode or sustain minority or minoritised languages (see debate in Skutnabb & Dunbar, 2010). In this section, which explores the perceptions of young MIL bilinguals of current language management in education, the objective is to communicate a sense of the presence or absence of MIL, the ideological paradigm in which MIL speakers are educated, and conceptualisations among young MIL speakers of a place for MIL in education. Ideologies and policies implicated in the valorisation and vitality of MIL are identified as they emerge, as are implications for the educational welfare and well-being of MIL-speakers. Broader discussion (in Chapter 5) of the minoritisation of MIL speakers is therefore informed by the specific contextualisation which the following data and analyses provide.

Informants discuss what they know or believe to be the current use of MIL in education, offer opinions on the notion of linguistic rights in education, and the scope, extent and purpose of any perceived entitlement to education in MIL. To contextualise such discussion, informants first recall personal experiences of education. Worthy of mention, in terms of Totonac vitality, is that most Totonac speakers report starting their education as MIL monolinguals. Given their ages (16-19), and if the CPF cohort is fairly representative, this affirms that at the start of the 21st century, Totonac still predominated as L1 among pre-school children in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, and, according to the 2010 census (INEGI, 2011a), still does.

Recollections of primary school are mostly very positive. Teaching staff are characterised as ‘helpful’ and ‘explaining everything’. Almost no mention is made of negative experiences, still less any problems of identity as MIL speakers. On the contrary, some informants explicitly refute this notion: ‘Everyone was treated exactly the same, and there was no such thing as discrimination.’<sup>CPF2</sup> Memories are of happy environments and unproblematic language use, with teachers who translate, help them pronounce Spanish correctly and actively teach the language. In fact, according to one informant from Huehuetla/Kgoyom ‘all the teachers who looked

after us were Totonac themselves and they never looked down on us; on the contrary they helped us more.’<sup>CPF</sup> Some teachers even encouraged them to ‘keep Totonac alive’<sup>CPF</sup> and wanted to teach it to Spanish-speakers. One respondent believes it was only ever fellow pupils, not teachers, who teased them for not knowing Spanish.

By way of contrast, one of the few negative recollections comes from an L1 Spanish-speaker who felt marginalised at a ‘supposedly bilingual’ school, where ‘bilingual teachers hardly spoke Spanish, the pupils hardly spoke Spanish.’<sup>CPF</sup> Likewise, a Totonac speaker refutes the notion of equality since he remembers the only student in his class that could keep pace with the Spanish monolingual teacher was her own son.

An interesting pattern is that the generally positive tone of initial answers is sometimes contradicted in later questioning. For example, one informant who initially answers that ‘there were never any problems with either teachers or classmates’,<sup>CPF1</sup> goes into detail at later stages to explain: ‘As a first nation person I was stopped from speaking my mother tongue, Totonac. There was never anywhere I could speak it; they used to fine me if I spoke it or if something slipped out in Totonac. I never ever saw a book written in Totonac, no-one ever talked to me about the importance or the value of my language. Schooldays were a difficult time for me, not being able to use Totonac was cruel.’<sup>CPF1</sup>

It can be argued that there is no inherent contradiction to such testimony. Rather, schooldays were experienced as positive, and are therefore recalled as such; however, the context in which these events are recalled - a sociolinguistic research study - and the nature of questioning, encourages critical reflection on prior experience. Moreover, the tone in which events are communicated might be performative in the sense that the sentiment conveyed is more proper of the social transmission of memory, than the individual experience (Tonkin & Whitehouse, 1995:23). This does not detract from the authenticity of the testimony; rather it highlights how the recall process facilitates an articulation of emotion that is true to the lived experience, but which, quite literally in this case, could not have been voiced at the time. These considerations – hindsight and performativity – are in addition to any subsequent development of language awareness or Xish consciousness among informants as they grew from children to younger adults. In

other words, that informants' memories of the past are sensitive to realignment of perspective and contextual reconstruction or re-articulation, is no more problematic or less complex than interpretations of the present environment.

The first limited mention of negative experiences with teachers occurs in respect of secondary school. In contrast with other studies, none of the informants report the use of corporal punishment at any stage in relation to MIL-use.<sup>180</sup> However, specific penalties for the use of MIL are recalled at secondary school; these take the form of 'sweeping out classroom'; and 'cleaning toilets'.<sup>CPF</sup> Informants couch these and other negative experiences in terms of discrimination: one argues that they received a poorer quality of education for being MIL speakers; they were considered 'not worth it ... the children of peasants ... dressed in home-made sandals... destined to work the land',<sup>CPF</sup> unlike Spanish-speaking counterparts, who, he believes, were regarded as destined to become 'teachers and nurses and cattle ranchers'<sup>CPF</sup>. Another informant, who is about to enter university, feels he has won his 'revenge' for discriminatory attitudes such as these by learning 'their' language 'perfectly', getting better results than 'them' and 'knocking them off their spot'.<sup>CPF</sup>

In sum, experiences of education, especially early-years, are recalled in generally positive terms, and language management per se is not usually referenced as a source of antagonism. Rather, it is the interpersonal impact of attitudes and ideologies that discriminate between sociolinguistic groups that is recalled as harmful, and conceptualised as unjust. Such ideologies can be reproduced by peers as well as by persons in authority. Therefore, as far as wider discussion of MIL and education is concerned (Chapter 5), debate cannot be limited to linguistic questions. Rather, it must address the extent to which the ideological environment in education fosters affective and psychological well-being of students, as well as academic achievement, especially for MIL speakers in a context of wider social minoritisation.<sup>181</sup>

---

<sup>180</sup> see for example, Mendoza Zuany 2009:214, where Zapotec speakers in Southern Mexico report beatings at primary school in the 1990s for speaking MIL

<sup>181</sup> Indeed, this was part of the *raison d'être* for establishing the CPF decades earlier (see Chapter 3).

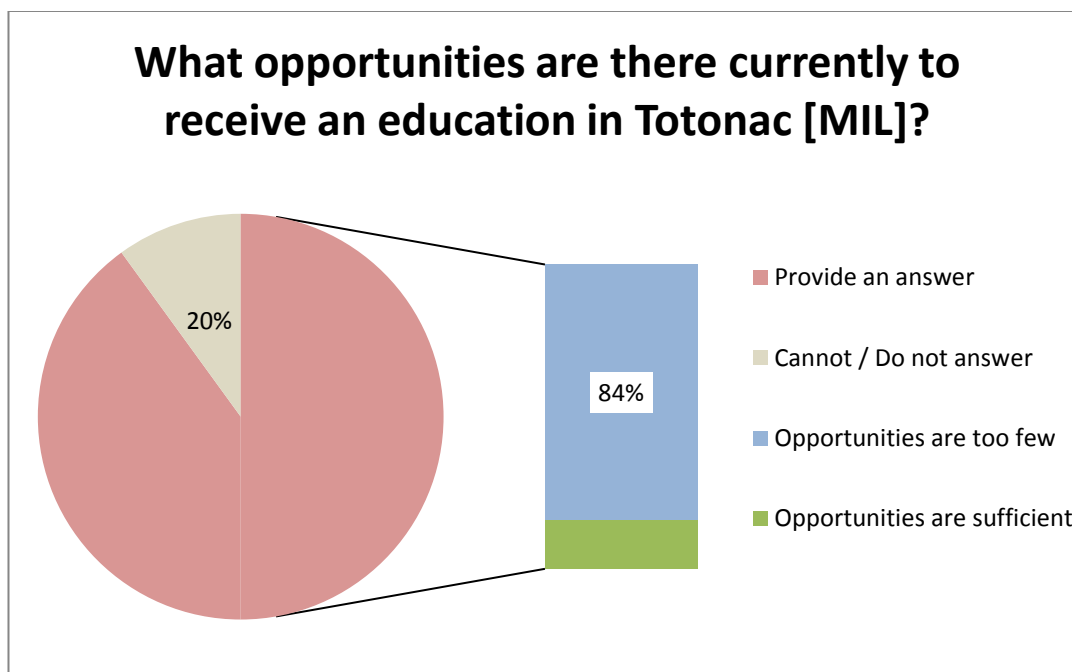
#### 4.2.1 Current provision for education in MIL

With this context in mind, an open question was posed: ‘What opportunities are there currently to receive an education in Totonac [MIL]?’ The question does not ask informants to explain, rationalise, justify, or speculate on the basis for current policy or provision, but simply to narrate or describe. However, it will be seen that informants take the opportunity to reflect and theorise, and this disposition is likely indicative of engagement with the topic of language-in-education.

Notwithstanding, there is a noticeable reduction in the rate of response to this question, compared to all other questions (even on the final page). For example, whereas there are usually only 0-1% null responses, here the incidence jumps to 20%. Some respondents simply state that they do not know the answer, while others leave the question blank. In the aforementioned recollections of school, 100% of informants respond. Therefore, this inability to respond, compared to all other questions, is itself indicative of perceptions of current MIL education provision.

On the one hand, it is unreasonable to expect that informants should keep abreast of education in MIL, simply by virtue of being MIL speakers, any more than any other young Mexican student. On the other hand, these informants are atypical inasmuch as they study at two institutions where MIL education and maintenance are inherent to the institutional discourses and *raison d’être*. Informants are ideally placed to gain awareness of the character of local provision at least. Therefore, it is considered that this reduced ability or disposition to provide an answer is itself meaningful. To an extent, it is likely indicative of the low profile of education in MIL, i.e. an absence or paucity of provision to comment upon, and low level of awareness of its existence. Indeed, many of the informants who do respond are actually commenting on what is lacking or absent, rather than what it is present and available; speaking of what *should be* on offer, rather than what *is*. Almost twice as much commentary is offered on hypothetical rather than actual scenarios.

**Figure 4.2 shows an aggregation of answers to the open question:  
‘What opportunities are there currently to receive an education in Totonac  
[MIL]?’**



In total, a fifth of informants are unable to comment on opportunities for education in MIL in the local environment, as seen in Figure 4.2 above. Among the four-fifths who do comment, the overwhelming majority (84%) perceive that MIL feature in education only to a very limited extent, and for a very specific purpose. They perceive that MIL are used only with young children in nurseries and primary schools in rural MIL-strongholds, and only in order to transition them into the Spanish-speaking education system. MIL do not usually feature again in the domain of education unless or until a student reaches higher education, and only because of the limited, specific educational offer in MIL at new intercultural universities, such as the UIEP.

The majority of informants conclude that, in effect, there is no education provision in MIL: ‘there’s nothing on offer ... there are very few classes in or about original languages.’<sup>UIEP2</sup> At school, according to another informant, it is clear that ‘... they only speak Spanish; if you speak Totonac, you learn to speak Spanish.’<sup>CPF32</sup> Any profile MIL do have is very limited, and almost always restricted to nursery or

reception classes within communities which state authorities have denominated as indigenous.<sup>182</sup> On this point, one older student <sup>UIEP41</sup> from UIEP makes mention of CONAFE, a government ministry which has run training programmes in literacy for bilingual primary school teachers in indigenous communities since the 1970s.

In terms of government agencies, there is a perception that the SEP (Ministry of Education) ‘isn’t bothered about Totonac; well not much anyway’.<sup>CPF26</sup> Furthermore, the nature of provision has not adapted to local context, so that provision is not always accessible to its target audience. For example, one informant remarks: ‘there isn’t much, only a few schools here and there, and those of us that are from Huehuetla, it’s a long way – more than seven hours walk – so we can’t study.’<sup>CPF 12</sup> The comment is a reminder that one also has to take into account the means and costs of a young person’s physical access to MIL education. Indeed, economic, logistical, and cultural questions of access, which include timetabling issues and the disruption to family agriculture and commerce, are highly determinant of the effectiveness and value of educational provision per se. These important points are borne in mind and re-visited for further discussion in Chapter 5.

In terms of current provision, when another informant contradicts the majority opinion and reports that ‘nearly all schools give classes in Totonac’,<sup>CPF9</sup> it is interesting to note that they come from a small hamlet (Lipuntahuaca) in Huehuetla/Kgoyom where almost all pre-school children acquire Totonac in the home. The few primary schools in this community title themselves ‘bilingual’, an official denomination by the state (RAND, 2005), rather than a descriptor of actual language practices and curriculum. In other words, that such schools are classified as bilingual is more indicative of the extent to which Totonac is present in the home life of pupils, than of its profile on the curriculum.

For language activists concerned with MIL vitality, the testimony of informants might appear both heartening and alarming. On the one hand, it is suggestive that intergenerational transmission of MIL and reinforcement in the home is still active; pre-school children indeed arrive at school as MIL speakers. On the other hand, the early encounter with the state education system is a definitive moment in the child’s

---

<sup>182</sup> For example, ‘the majority of schools speak Spanish, only pre-schools speak Totonac’;<sup>CPF35</sup> and MIL are used ‘only in indigenous communities in bilingual primaries’.<sup>CPF13; UIEP 3</sup>



life, highly influencing language beliefs as well as language behaviours which fail to develop the use of MIL. Whatever the language practices of the home environment, the use of Spanish becomes normalised for the greater part of the child's day among their peers and with key elders (teachers, directors) for at least the next decade, if not permanently.

The concern here is not at Spanish functioning as an additional language in the child's life, but rather that a suite of language attitudes and beliefs are embedded within normative language practices. School, whether or not it is denominated bilingual, is the site where these practices are intimately encountered. Its de facto function is to transition pupils to the use of Spanish and to lifelong encounter with discourses of national identity (as discussed in Pitarch, 1998). It is the accumulative effect of language attitudes and practices encountered in these key years and arenas of development, which modify a young person's everyday use of MIL and/or perception of MIL, and can even jeopardise their eventual transmission of MIL to the next generation. As their comments on language valorisation reveal, such a scenario is as much a concern to the informants as it is to the wider RLS and EL research communities.

In effect, the only arena where MIL noticeably features in education is in pre-school or primary education in MIL-dominant communities; however, bilingual practices are minimal; and these function primarily for the purpose of facilitating full transition to Spanish.<sup>183</sup> Moving on, informants report still less regarding MIL in secondary or high school education. Mention is made of niche MIL provision in a limited number of schools where MIL-speakers predominate. As examples, two informants mention *telesecundarias*, a type of school found in more isolated communities, which rely on distance-learning technology, such as television, radio, or internet, operated by learning assistants. One informant<sup>UIEP3</sup> mentions the *Bachillerato* (state high school) in Cuetzálan, a town denominated by state tourism agencies as a '*Pueblo Mágico*' (lit. enchanted village) or protected reserve of indigenous culture and language, colonial architecture and natural landscapes. In

---

<sup>183</sup> Perceptions affirmed in more personalised, open questions earlier in the questionnaire which ask them to recount memories of schooling and language use.

both types of school, MIL feature as objects of study, rather than vehicles of study, despite the high incidence of MIL as L1.

Beyond such examples, MIL seem to disappear from education, and a clear line of thought emerges, proposing a general expansion of provision: ‘... there are few bilingual schools; they should build more, at least in this region.’ UIEP<sup>18</sup> ‘they should give classes in original languages.’ UIEP<sup>20</sup> It is this absence of provision which makes CPF all the more exceptional, a fact which CPF informants seem fully aware of: ‘I think only at ‘Paulo Freire School’.’ CPF<sup>41</sup>; ... at [Paulo Freire] we do Totonac; CPF<sup>29</sup> ‘Yes, here [Colegio Paulo Freire] because I go to the literature workshops - we always write in Totonac in the literature workshops’. CPF<sup>6</sup> Another informant describes the school as ‘home from home’ because they can speak Totonac freely with their peers and because ‘we take seriously the knowledge that comes from our people, the first nations.’ CPF<sup>1</sup> In contrast to these repeated references to CPF, when other informants suggest there are ‘many’ or ‘more’ opportunities for education in MIL nowadays, none cites an example.

However, not only specific examples but also vague perceptions are still valuable data. Change is known to be occurring in Mexico at legislative and bureaucratic level (Grinevald, 2008); as such, when a minority of informants believe, with or without evidence, that educational provision in MIL is expanding, this suggests that government rhetoric is filtering into wider consciousness. In turn, such perceptions also carry implications for the young people, in terms of their own language attitudes and behaviours, and their future interaction with wider processes of language management. These issues of perceptions and evidence speak to wider debate on ideological continuity and change in the sociolinguistic environment, and are revisited in Chapter 5.

One specific arena where change is both perceived and evidenced is in higher education; specifically the new Intercultural Universities. Awareness is widespread and perceptions generally positive: ‘... the UI are a good option’ UIEP<sup>3</sup> ‘... Nowadays the existence of universities which are intercultural means bilingual education is possible’; UIEP<sup>26</sup> ‘...the nearest opportunity is at the Universidad Intercultural del Estado de Puebla’; CPF<sup>16</sup> ‘they offer a degree in language and culture, and in that they

use different languages’; CPF 46 ‘the UIEP is trying to do that, to promote our culture’.

UIEP 12

Strong awareness of the intercultural universities is to be expected, since almost half the informants are UIEP students and the remainder live in the municipality that the UIEP serves. However, of more note is that all references to the UIEP can be characterised as positive. Informants especially note its role in promoting MIL acquisition, the accreditation of MIL use and professionalisation of MIL teaching methods. Such positive reception was not inevitable for at least two reasons. First, most informants would be aware that the history of the UIEP has been problematic. Recent outbreaks of student unrest on campus over irregularities with fees, student supervision and graduation procedures, with accusations of involvement by external political interests on both sides, culminated in a very public change of vice-chancellor, senior staff and management.

Second, CPF informants had witnessed an initial lack of enthusiasm from the school director, who regarded UIEP as less prestigious than the preferred ‘mainstream’ destinations for alumni, namely the BUAP in Puebla, the UNAM in Mexico City or the UACH agricultural university in Mexico state.<sup>184</sup>

That local informants are generally positively disposed towards the UIEP is also important to recall when processing literature which has critiqued Mexican intercultural universities in sometimes scathing terms; for example, as ‘little academic Bantustans’ (Pérez-Aguilera & Figueroa-Helland, 2011:290). While it is crucial to maintain scepticism and monitor the top-down, potentially acculturative character of the intercultural universities, it is unhelpful to overlook the significance of the UIEP to young people, in terms of educational and employment options available locally (including employment on-campus for wider family members). In terms of continuity and change, the UIEP is probably the most profound socio-economic and educational change since the era of the OIT mobilisation and the establishment of the CPF, even though these agents are ideologically juxtaposed.

That said, it is somewhat polemical that this expansion of MIL education is situated in the HE sector, given the ongoing criticism of Mexico’s disproportionate

---

<sup>184</sup> Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Chapingo; all three also offer grants to MIL speakers

investment in HE relative to its total education budget (see Chapter 2), not to mention the concern in language maintenance research that priority should be given to initiatives fostering intergenerational language transmission and early-years' acquisition. Therefore, at the local and national level, legitimate questions arise about the best targeting of resources in education..

At the same time, there is a tendency in the discourses of language endangerment to decry language shift and champion revitalisation without formulating contingent strategies of socio-economic character that could modify the range of options available to speakers of minoritised languages (Mufwene, 2005). As discussed in Chapter 1, language loss is the cumulative effect of pragmatic, contextual decisions by individual speakers: therefore, evaluating available life-choices, and theorising alternatives, should be as central a concern to the discipline as it is to endangered language speakers. Indeed, Totonac speakers in Huehuetla/Kgoyom are of interest precisely because they not only theorised but strategised to meet such needs, instrumentalising (but not reifying) a shared linguistic culture.

What emerges is that the opportunities and threats that the UIEP poses to the prospects of both Totonac and Totonac-speakers need to be urgently and objectively assessed. Meanwhile, informants are generally positive about the UIEP, and have difficulty identifying other evidence of change in MIL education, even when they believe it is occurring. It may be that the two notions are related: a single initiative (establishing the UIEP campus in a tiny hamlet of a MIL stronghold) makes such profound impact on everyday lives, that perceptions of wider change ensue, and assumptions are generated about wider ideological and political shift.

Returning to the general profile of MIL in education, the Ministry of Education (SEP) has committed itself to extending education about MIL to all primary and secondary school children in the Republic, not only in communities identified as indigenous (SEP, 2004), while education in MIL will extend to communities where they are spoken. In terms of implementation of the first objective and Totonac, a development at the time of writing (2015) was that SEP had just announced its intention to include a sample of Totonac poetry (by Manuel Sainos) in primary school textbooks used in Puebla state. Sainos is currently the only Totonac poet with any degree of profile outside his home community (of Cuetzálan). He volunteered as

an editor for the project run by *Xtachuwin Kinkachikinkan Xa Akgtutu Nakú* (the language maintenance caucus and partner in the quid-pro-quo arrangement of this research; see Chapter 3), to produce a Totonac literacy tool, established by students from the CPF and with subsequent collaboration from UIEP.<sup>185</sup> This small act of inclusion of one poet's work in one school textbook has multiple implications for the profile and valorisation of Totonac, and is discussed further in Chapter 5.

To continue with the topic of the profile given to MIL linguistic cultures in education, it is interesting to note economic factors emerging in the informants' data. For example, independently of one another and unprompted by the questionnaire, two students respond to the questions on MIL education by only referring to the subject of teachers' pay: 'better pay for schoolteachers'<sup>UIEP2</sup>; is their concern, specifically 'a better wage for bilingual teachers so they carry on teaching the language.'<sup>UIEP36</sup> What these responses indicate is a level of consciousness, articulated as a conceptual connection between ideological change regarding MIL educational provision and political change regarding conditions and practices.<sup>186</sup>

In other words, these informants place MIL education into socio-economic context. The need for such perspective on all issues related to MIL-maintenance was discussed at the beginning of this thesis, (Chapter 1) and is reiterated throughout. The disparity between urban and rural infrastructure discussed in Chapter 3, issues of rural teachers' additional costs and reduced salaries are all pertinent for any discussion of expansion of MIL education (see Chapter 5).

It is not only teachers' pay which is problematised by informants, but also the recruitment and placement of MIL-speaking teachers: '... but there aren't any teachers who speak Totonac.'<sup>UIEP35</sup> This lack creates a vicious circle in terms of demand: 'there's not much demand because only very very few schools still give classes in Totonac.'<sup>IRT7</sup> With so few opportunities in MIL education to comment upon, informants turn instead to explaining the perceived gap in provision, and the unifying theme is a lack of faith in the state. Although awareness exists of recent

<sup>185</sup> Sainos is probably the only Totonac poet with any current public profile. Sainos participated as an editor for the children's storybook that forms part of the quid-pro-quo arrangement for this research.

<sup>186</sup> Both respondents study at UIEP, which might be pertinent, since students have protested on campus in solidarity with staff over pay and insecurity of contracts.

changes in law to recruit bilingual teachers, there is also scepticism that appropriate resources will be applied: ‘funding is needed from the institutions.’ UIEP37

Furthermore, there is doubt that the institutions of the state fully appreciate the true nature of bilingual education or are fully committed to education in MIL:

‘unfortunately most of those institutions do not actually put into practice the basic principles of education in original languages or bilingual education.’ UIEP28 Greater evidence of policy implementation is needed to fully believe in it, since so far, change has been too slow and too modest. Even though the demand for MIL education is not new, ‘the education system is only just starting to incorporate recognition of language and culture.’ UIEP31 The state is viewed as slow and incompliant, with a disconnect between words and deeds: ‘an education in original languages forms part of the demands which original nations have been voicing since 1994, that's the reason why the government has opened up bilingual schools, which at first only offered primary education but now are offering secondary and high school education, but sadly in most of those schools they don't put into practice the basic principles of a bilingual education’. UIEP28

The reference to 1994 recalls the Zapatista march on Mexico City (see Chapter 2) and the ramifications for public discourses of MIL communities. In other words, informants' attention turns to historic tensions and the perception that change is undermined by a lack of political will: ‘that's what the law says but it is not respected. Laws are made to be broken.’ UIEP1 The concomitant conclusion is that ideological shift is most required among those with the power to effect change. Unfortunately, power and discrimination seem to be intrinsically linked: the educational institutions ‘speak in Spanish with pupils nowadays and don't take original languages into account’; UIEP11 because ‘the priority status of Spanish always overshadows original languages.’ UIEP4

That said, others locate the need for ideological change primarily among MIL learners and MIL-speaking communities. For example, if you want to learn MIL, ‘you just need to take an interest and do some research.’ UIEP33 Such sentiment is echoed by another: ‘in fact, bilingual schools already exist .... it just takes people to find out which communities have them and then parents make a choice where to send their children. IRT3 Opportunities for MIL-acquisition are perceived to already exist

in the local environment: ‘anyone who wants to learn has the right to do so, whether that’s asking around or going to an adult learning class, like INEA; CPF 40 The problem is more one of attitude and disposition: ‘currently people take very little interest in education in original languages; UIEP24 Therefore, if there is genuine interest in expanding MIL education, ideological shift is required on all sides.

Given that the objective of MIL education is MIL maintenance, the topic of MIL maintenance generates an abundance of comments. The abundant use of first person pronouns and possessives in their language evokes a sense of affinity between the topic (MIL education) and the speakers (Hunston & Thompson, 2000), while the content echoes sentiments above that MIL speakers need to be pro-active: ‘...so that the Totonac language carries on and we never abandon it, and in fact we hardly speak Totonac anymore. CPF 3 Not everyone believes formal education is necessarily the best vehicle for language maintenance: ‘Language revitalisation has to take place in the communities where they are mother tongues, by facilitating [intergenerational] transmission; it is too difficult to carry out in public schools because they have to offer so many other subjects.’ UIEP33

If MIL are to be maintained, the commitment also extends to learners and MIL-speakers. Most informants have at least one MIL monolingual parent, but concern is voiced that ‘some [bilinguals] discriminate against their own original language, and they discriminate against their own parents.’ UIEP19 Related to this, there is a belief that MIL maintenance and revitalisation should only be pursued ‘if speakers of that language want to save it.’ UIEP42 The agenda of MIL revitalisation may even be more the product of non-speakers: ‘when others start to realise how important original languages are, they think they have to try and revitalise them and lament their passing.’ UIEP27

That said, most informants discuss responsibilities on both sides of the linguistic divide. MIL speakers are challenged to respond pro-actively to discrimination and language endangerment: ‘The best way forward is for us to be accepted as human beings who speak an original language of Mexico, and we as speakers should begin to produce literary texts and defend our language.’ UIEP 26 This correlation of language ‘defence’ with the production of literary texts is interesting and re-visited in



discussion in Chapter 5. Meanwhile, another informant puts it succinctly: ‘we just have to keep on keeping on.’ CPF 5

On the one hand, responses acknowledge language loss is occurring: ‘some of our languages are being lost;’ UIEP25 on the other hand, they denounce it: ‘the Totonac language should not be lost.’ CPF 17 This tension is articulated in the demand for MIL education: ‘there is a demand for all children, young people and adults to be able to learn and communicate in Totonac and talk to each other so that the language is not lost.’ CPF25 Specifically, education should ensure ‘... that you can speak Totonac properly and learn to write in Totonac.’ CPF14 because ‘.... if nothing is done we’ll lose the essence of what we used to know and we’ll end up using another [language] because of modernisation.’ UIEP38.

It is interesting that the informant chooses the term ‘modernisation’ to encapsulate the existential threat to his/her community’s language and knowledge base. The term was deliberately employed in the questionnaire to test its reception, and the suggestion of its correlation with language loss generates strongly negative reactions (see discussion later in the chapter). Meanwhile, the concern at language loss and erosion of the community’s cultural reserve sometimes leads to almost reverential language: ‘many people are nostalgic for that sacred language [Totonac].’ CPF 15 Such lexical choices likely communicate a depth of feeling and positive valorisation; at the same time, they convey potentially problematic trends. In discussions of the utility or validity of Totonac for all communicative functions, domains and purposes of young people’s everyday contemporary lives, such notions might prove counter-productive.

Although words such as ‘sacred’ confer intense value on the ethnolinguistic culture, they also arguably connote qualities of an untouchable, inflexible or static nature. When a linguistic culture is overly associated with one set of values (e.g. spiritual, folkloric, ancient) and not others (e.g. secular, technological, contemporary), the risk (discussed in Chapter 2 and returned to in Chapter 5), is that it can be conceptually corralled into a reduced terrain of functions and purposes, delimited by others.

Given the paucity of education in MIL to report, many informants instead reflect on valorisations of their language and culture, and comment on perceived educational



needs and rights, and theorise a transformed education system in which MIL are fully integrated. For example: ‘what they should do is publish materials in Totonac; in school what would be interesting would be to receive in Totonac the classes we currently receive in Spanish.’ CPF<sup>33</sup> The ideal scenario, voiced here and in earlier responses, is for education to reflect the routine, everyday translanguaging practices of young people, and to adopt a multilingual character at all levels: ‘I believe that right from the start of learning or whenever a pupil starts education they should speak to him in original languages, at pre-school, primary, secondary, high school, and other levels, because original languages are important and fundamental for the student, and because he will find himself in situations in other communities where they speak Totonac or Náhuatl.’ UIEP<sup>14</sup>

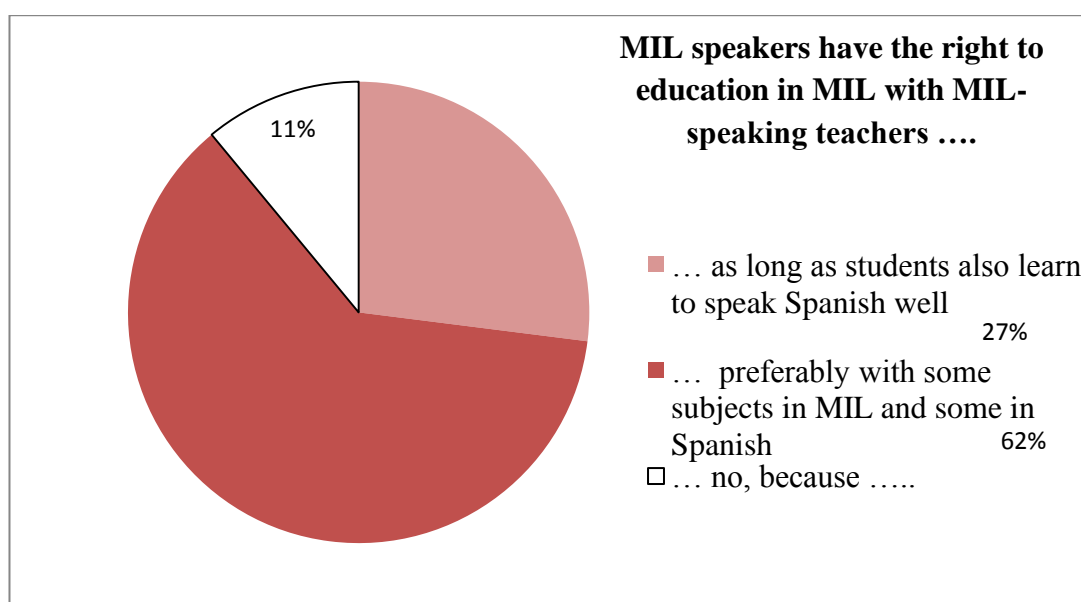
To conclude, it appears that informants found this question about current opportunities for education in MIL more difficult to answer directly, compared to others. Instead, many responses opt for theorising the lack of opportunities, and hypothesising alternative scenarios. By analysing their commentaries, it is possible to construct a narrative that synthesises and summarises attitudes and beliefs. This narrative reveals that there is almost no profile for MIL in education; what little exists is largely restricted to nursery or primary schools in ‘indigenous’ communities, and functions to transition young children to exclusive use of Spanish. In such a context, the CPF remains an historic exception and the UIEP a recent innovation.

Some informants do believe that the environment is changing (evidenced by UIEP). Nonetheless, predominant sentiment is that provision in MIL must be greatly expanded; such expansion also necessitates an increase in teachers’ pay, teacher-training, and importantly, greater translation of policy into practice, given recent law reform. To this end, firmer political will is required to demonstrate ideological commitment on the part of those with power in the arena of education. The character of education could and should be transformed without controversy to reflect the everyday multilingualism of students, and to foster skilful proficiency and pride in each of the languages young people use. In the next section, more detail is given to define and describe the character of such multilingual education.

#### 4.2.2 Linguistic Rights and Education in MIL

In this section, the focus shifts towards discourses of linguistic rights regarding education in MIL. The question is posed: ‘Should communities who speak Totonac [MIL] have the right to insist that their teachers also speak Totonac [the same language] and that schools give classes in Totonac [their language]? Informants choose between multiple choices, and provide additional commentary if they wish to explain further.<sup>187</sup> Informants can also reject all choices on offer, and construct their own statement of rights. For those who do (9% of respondents), the content of their statements is analysed, and if appropriate, aggregated with other available options. In whichever format it is expressed, the overall content and tone of opinion from the whole cohort is analysed, and the caveats, nuances and distinguishing detail of alternative comments included in the discussion which follows.

**Figure 4.3 shows opinion on MIL-speakers’ rights to education in MIL**



There is almost universal support for MIL as an object of study: ‘the most important thing of all is to have Totonac as a subject so students keep up Totonac and never

<sup>187</sup> These are: 1) Yes, as long as students learn to speak Spanish as well; 2) Yes, but better to have some subjects in Totonac [MIL] and some in Spanish; 3) No, because the students would finish school without being able to speak good Spanish; 4) No, because this would divide the country, all Mexican schools should only use Spanish; or finally: 5) My opinion is different – I explain it here.

stop speaking in their original languages;’ <sup>CPF34</sup> The gradation of colour in the pie chart above (Figure 4.3) indicates the extent of support for education in MIL and for MIL-speaking teachers, and shows that two differently nuanced but complementary opinions predominate. A substantial minority (more than a quarter) favour education through the medium of MIL. The majority, however, support the use of both Spanish and Totonac or MIL in the classroom. An important caveat to both these views is that skills in Spanish must be maintained: ‘it’s important to have Spanish as a subject.,’ <sup>CPF34</sup> and language skills in both Spanish and MIL enhanced, rather than one language be sacrificed to another: ‘... it would be wonderful to have both languages as subjects [at school] so that we learn to speak well in both the languages we have.’ <sup>CPF33</sup>

In other words, all scenarios conceptualise education as a multilingual enterprise, meaning school teachers necessarily should also be MIL-speakers: ‘one very important point is that teachers really must be able to speak Totonac for this type of school.’ <sup>IRT3</sup> The ideal education system fosters competence in both languages, rather than allowing skills in either language to diminish. Indeed, there is only one comment which one might consider militantly pro-MIL: ‘... Yes, they should have the right [to MIL-speaking teachers/an education in MIL], and then they can decide if they want to learn Spanish or not.’ <sup>UIEP15</sup> Rather, the desire for expansion in MIL education provision (expressed in the previous section) is complemented but also counterbalanced here by conceptualisations of linguistic rights as inclusive and developmental of MIL, Spanish and bilinguality.

While opinion does appear to converge, a point of interest is an observable difference in response between the two cohorts of informants. The UIEP students – older, university undergraduates – mostly prefer a balanced approach between the use of MIL and Spanish in education, while the CPF students – younger high school pupils – agree but to a lesser extent (48% CPF compared to 60% UIEP). In addition, UIEP comments are more uniform and settled, while opinion is more divided and uncertain among the high school students. For example, when MIL are proposed as the prime medium of education, slightly more CPF favour this option than do UIEP (29% compared to 26%); nevertheless, it is also CPF students who express greater anxiety about preserving skills in Spanish. To illustrate, a first glance at the pie chart suggests that just over a tenth of informants (11%) reject bilingual or MIL education

as a proposition; however, closer scrutiny of the figures reveals that this number is comprised almost entirely of CPF pupils. None of the UIEP students select this option, whereas 15% of the CPF cohort does, on the basis that it could undermine competence in Spanish.

A number of issues emerge here. First, regarding support for bilingual education, it is interesting to note that this is sometimes expressed in terms which reference ethical, or moral values, as well as linguistic issues: ‘a fairer system would be to speak in both languages [Totonac and Spanish]’; <sup>UIEP37</sup> argues one informant, and another believes that ‘original languages should be put in place as one of the subjects available right up to university level;’<sup>UIEP13</sup> and multilingualism should extend beyond the boundaries of MIL-predominant communities - ‘It should be this way throughout the Republic’ <sup>UIEP6</sup> - in order to better expose the linguistic and cultural value of MIL: ‘

The drivers of language loss and obstacles to maintenance are viewed as more societal than linguistic: ‘it would be a loss to only learn one language but that [the alternative] will never happen in this globalised world.’ <sup>UIEP31</sup> This probably contextualises comments which create a moral equivalence between the use of MIL and Spanish in language education: ‘the languages should be respected ... learning all the languages is no different from teaching Spanish so that you can speak all of them’; <sup>UIEP33</sup> and that ‘our languages have to be demonstrated or taught so that everybody learns and knows what meaning they have.’ <sup>CPF32</sup>

The unifying theme of such propositions is a revalorisation of MIL/Totonac. Such revalorisation challenges their current ghettoisation, in literal and conceptual terms, and favours their greater profile on the national stage. Education in MIL is therefore regarded not merely as a linguistic question, but is recast as a socio-political project, one which, according to this informant, concerns the civil and human rights of a community of people: ‘my opinion is that we all have the right to freedom.’ <sup>CPF31</sup>

By contrast, when giving reasons for rejecting an expansion of bilingual or MIL education, few informants give non-linguistic motives. One does agree with the suggestion that it could be divisive to the Mexican nation, and another fears it could be prejudicial to current staff: ‘It would be unfair to the teacher, what if they can’t

speak Totonac?’<sup>CPF15</sup> However, the greater part of anxieties are not explicitly socio-political but linguistic, and specifically relate to ensuring competence in Spanish.

Indeed, such concern over Spanish emerges at different points in the questionnaire. Earlier it was seen that younger CPF informants appear less confident than older UIEP counterparts regarding their written expression and production in Spanish. Here, similar concern is echoed in response to stimulus statements. These are used in the questionnaire as devices for re-testing opinion in different ways (see Chapter 3). For example, in one stimulus statement on inter-generational transmission, a MIL-speaking mother justifies her decision to raise her children speaking Spanish. There is considerable sympathy for her statement from both younger and older students, in responses that lament the injustice of a situation that forces the mother into such a decision, whilst comprehending its logic.

This reaction is suggestive that, while ambivalence towards bilingual or MIL education may be articulated in apparently linguistic terms (concern over Spanish skills), attitudes belie a multiplicity of concerns which are social in nature. The perceptible anxiety they convey at achieving fully expressive competence in Spanish is underpinned by pragmatic analysis of context - prevailing language policies and ideologies - and evaluation of the relative socio-economic value of Spanish.<sup>188</sup>

Therefore, in order for language attitudes, motives, choices, management, beliefs and behaviours to be better understood, there is clearly a need for speakers’ context to be even more fully and accurately investigated, analysed and interpreted. Such scrutiny will no doubt prove complex and cross-disciplinary; however it will facilitate more context-appropriate and hopefully successful responses to language maintenance in situations of endangerment (Strubell, 2001).

---

<sup>188</sup> This concern over acquisition of Spanish is found in literature on bilingual education elsewhere in Latin America, which documents not just ambivalence, but sometimes antagonism and resistance to bilingual and indigenous language education perceived to diminish children’s access to Spanish language teaching and resources (Howard, 2009).

### 4.2.3 Linguistic rights and disseminating MIL

Finally, another hypothetical question is posed in order to extend discussion about linguistic rights, the valorisation of Spanish and MIL, and approaches to MIL education. Since all MIL speakers who attend school inevitably acquire Spanish, informants are asked if Spanish monolinguals in MIL-predominant communities (such as Huehuetla/Kgoyom), should learn Totonac/the local MIL at school.

The majority of informants (58%) disagree with this proposition, and the primary objection is its compulsory element. Almost all who object believe that learning MIL should be a free choice: ‘I don’t think anyone should be made to learn, but instead we should try to get Spanish speakers interested in learning Totonac.’ CPF36 Similarly, it is considered better to raise consciousness and arouse interest in MIL rather than impose study: ‘obligatory, no, they should be invited to learn Totonac and if they accept so much the better.’ IRT2

A minority view is that the endeavour would prove unproductive: ‘Other people don’t like speaking it; they feel embarrassed about using the Totonac language.’ CPF21 The informant uses the verb *apenar* which conveys a strong sense of humiliation. As discussed earlier and in Chapter 2, it has been claimed that MIL speakers avoid use of MIL in public spaces because of such feelings; in this comment it is assumed that Spanish speakers will also react similarly to using MIL. However, such assumption is not evident in other comments from UIEP informants who have become L2 speakers of MIL, for example: ‘My opinion is that it’s very important to learn another language, it’s a nice thing and you will feel proud of yourself if you learn something, even if it’s only a little bit.’ CPF31

The benefits of language learning per se are echoed by another who argues that, rather than introduce MIL compulsorily, it would be better to ‘look at why it [the local MIL] is not spoken as much and look at the positive aspects of knowing more than one language’ UIEP38 The latter makes no conceptual distinction between learning MIL and learning any other language. A similar tone is echoed elsewhere; for example, another believes it would be beneficial to Spanish speakers, ‘so that they can become bilingual and so that they can communicate better with other people.’ CPF27

Among UIEP informants, the most common response is to concur with the intent, but not the content of the proposition. There is agreement it might impact positively on intercultural understanding, and could modify attitudes for the benefit of community relations: ‘even if people who don’t know how to speak MIL could just at least understand them and try to communicate with people and not to be making a scene when other people are speaking in their own language.’<sup>UIEP22</sup> As another concludes: ‘that’s the only way which will help us to communicate better with people.’<sup>UIEP31</sup>

However, the majority plainly reject placing an obligation on schoolchildren: ‘no-one should be forced, but they should be taught how important it is to make an effort to communicate in original languages, and they should learn about the consequences it will have if everyone only speaks Spanish’<sup>CPF42</sup>

#### **4.2.4 Conclusion: ideologies and policies of MIL in education**

In conclusion, when young MIL speakers freely hypothesise, they believe the best education is multilingual in character, and that education in MIL is a right for all MIL speakers throughout the Republic. What is perceived as desirable, as a right, and indeed as equality, is education which reflects young people's multilingual identities, and which maintains and enhances diversity and bilinguality. MIL should be a subject of study and/or medium of instruction, while proficiency in Spanish should be fully maintained and enhanced. There is no desire to compel or antagonise Spanish speakers into MIL acquisition, but there is anxiety to defend and foster the linguistic heritage of local communities and the nation, and to disrupt the devalorisation of MIL and minoritisation of MIL speakers. A perception does exist that the ideological environment in education is changing in general terms. New policies and linguistic rights which exist as legislation are welcomed, but evidence of specific implementation is lacking, producing some scepticism of political will.

Until now, state education has functioned to facilitate cultural and linguistic transit towards a national Spanish-speaking identity and to reduce the domains and purposes of MIL-use among young people. The perceptions of paucity of provision, of the absence of MIL in education after early-years, and of the late emergence of MIL education at intercultural universities, all chime with the literature on national language policy and management in recent decades (e.g. Terborg et al, 2007). The ideologies which have informed such policies require reconfiguration in order for tangible change to occur. Yet, such ideological change is not infeasible to these young MIL bilinguals (the next generation of parents, teachers and policy-makers) since they already convey a sense of ease with multilingualism, and a disposition to expand, rather than restrict, the domains and purposes of MIL use.

With these findings in mind, the chapter turns to multilingualism and the use of MIL in other aspects of the local environment, namely healthcare and policing, to gather data on young people's perceptions of language management in historically contested domains of cultural control and public service.



### 4.3 Language ideologies and policies: MIL and health services

This section begins with analysis of general patterns of response to questioning on how public health services are perceived as dealing with a person who speaks Totonac or another MIL but does not speak Spanish. It moves on to more detailed analysis of perceptions of language management in healthcare, and lends focus to informants' theorisation of their context. It closes with conceptualisations of linguistic rights in healthcare and hypotheses for future language policy.

The community of Huehuetla/Kgoyom is an important municipal centre in the Puebla highlands; alongside public and private GP surgeries, pharmacies and dentists typical of other rural towns, it is also served by a public hospital with walk-in clinic and maternity facility. Since this research study began, a state-run traditional Totonac medicine clinic has been opened alongside the hospital. Totonac medicine first became an arena for public funding in Huehuetla/Kgoyom during the period of indigenous OIT government in the late 1980s (see Chapter 3), but there have always been independent Totonac herbalists, midwives and *macuchina* locally. The latter is usually rendered as *curanderos* in Spanish, meaning healers, rather than *médicos* or doctors, thus translation functions to diminish the status or credibility of the office.

Despite this apparent plethora of services at the municipal centre, it is worth remembering that only 10% of all Totonac speakers (compared to 90% of all Spanish monolinguals), are located here. Instead, 90% of the Totonac-speaking population is dispersed in small communities and homesteads among densely forested mountain slopes and valleys. Monolingual Totonac-speakers, compared to monolingual-Spanish counterparts, are therefore already more likely to experience diminished access to health services because of reduced access to co-dependent resources, i.e. the road network, and cash for transport and medicines.

To illustrate, during my fieldwork, one fellow CPF volunteer was unable to seek hospital treatment for a serious illness and was treated at home by relatives until he recovered sufficiently to be helped to walk across the terrain from his homestead to the road and driven to hospital. MIL speakers explain that whereas traditional Totonac doctors and midwives routinely travel on foot to attend people in their homes and communities, *mestizo* doctors and state services either function out of

static facilities or do not stray far from the road network. It is therefore not uncommon to observe MIL speakers carrying sick children considerable distances.

Moreover, fieldwork attests that MIL speakers can leave consultations without taking prescriptions to be dispensed, because of their inaccessible costs. A common complaint is that policies of free, universal healthcare for low-income families exist in theory, but that in practice, patients can be turned away for lack of identification or incorrect paperwork (all in Spanish) , and that the hospital dispensary runs out of common items (including antibiotics, syringes, and dressings) for treatment. As a result, patients' relatives may need to make a round trip of at least four hours to the nearest large town to purchase these items from a larger pharmacy.

With this context in mind, this section opens with discussion of general patterns of responses to the first of two questions: 'what happens when public health services deal with a person [patient] who speaks Totonac [MIL] but [and] does not speak Spanish?' An initial observation is that the question generates a good level of engagement. All except one in each cohort make a response: all answers are complete, and in general, are longer, more varied and more information-dense than on other social topics – a vindication of the decision to question informants on healthcare in this study. A second observable pattern is that, within such a substantial level of response, some differentiation can still be perceived between the two informant cohorts: the younger, more entirely local CPF pupils offer extra detail, more nuance, and greater diversity of opinion in their responses, while the UIEP answers are more convergent, comparatively less detailed, and convey a tone which is more unequivocally critical. This pattern is somewhat mirrored in findings on education, but appears more marked on this topic.

Regarding the CPF cohort, the manner in which the question is interpreted, and the tone and content of replies, can also be roughly divided into two sub-sets: the first, smaller set uses more evaluative language. They make assessments of the ideological context in which MIL speakers' gain access to health services, locate causes, agents, effects, and draw conclusions which are wholly negative. Problems are described in generic terms, using the language and concepts of rights, discrimination and inequality: 'they are discriminated against or even ignored'.<sup>IRT2</sup> Such attitudes are

attested by various forms of maltreatment: such as ‘they are treated with ignorance’;  
IRT<sup>7</sup> Among this discourse, there is limited discussion of solutions.

However, the second, larger set responds to the question in more literal or narrative terms: ‘what happens is that they can’t communicate.’<sup>CPF 1</sup> The situation is contextualised by describing and recounting the inherent difficulties of communication which characterise it: ‘if it is someone who doesn’t speak or understand Spanish, then no-one is going to understand each other,’<sup>CPF 19</sup> or, as another informant explains: ‘there is no understanding about what is going on.’<sup>CPF16</sup> The problems of gaining, or rather, failing to gain, access to medical care are recounted and largely characterised as linguistic; ‘it would be very difficult [for MIL monolinguals] to speak to them [health services] in Spanish.’<sup>CPF 22</sup> As one informant makes clear, a number of things can go wrong because ‘they can’t communicate because when one person speaks Totonac and another speaks Spanish they can’t understand each other.’<sup>CPF25</sup>

Among this group, solutions are more often the focus: these are pragmatic and usually, but not exclusively, sought by MIL speakers: ‘Probably they get hold of someone to interpret what the patient says so that the doctor can understand, because if they don’t, he won’t be able to help them’<sup>CPF 28</sup> Responsibilities are located and assessments made: these tend to be more equivocal, sometimes neutral, although few are wholly positive.<sup>189</sup>

In contrast to this variation in responses at CPF, most UIEP informants converge in their approach. They evaluate the situation and communicate their perceptions of the ideological framework prevailing in access to healthcare, seen in comments such as: ‘They get unequal treatment compared to others who speak Spanish’.<sup>UIEP 24</sup> In general, answers exhibit a narrower range of opinions, which are less equivocal and predominantly negative. Despite the negative tone (i.e. in qualitative terms), informants actually comment less (in quantitative terms) on ideologies. Instead, answers are also more focussed on the practices, behaviours and linguistic strategies associated with accessing health care.

---

<sup>189</sup> Compared to policing, more answers are non-committal, or offer qualification (e.g. as far as I know, I believe, I think, in my opinion) or are less negative and more nuanced.

These patterns are a reminder that when theorising sociolinguistic context, questions of response, responsibility, and agency are highly pertinent. Such conceptual filters can be useful in decoding perceptions of language ideologies, policies, and management and in coming to an appreciation of sociolinguistic discrimination by those who experience it. Here, language ideologies refer to attitudes and beliefs perceived to be shaping and colouring the reception of MIL speakers by health professionals, while policies refers to the events of encounters as described by informants. Informants theorise their context by offering explanations, assessments, or evaluations of practices and attitudes, conceptualise concomitant linguistic rights and hypothesise desirable policy change.

#### **4.3.1 Framing public services: identifying language ideologies**

As mentioned, some informants take a more narrative approach to the question, and frame MIL monolinguals' encounters with health services in less evaluative and antagonistic terms. Their comments suggest that although difficulties do exist, the key hurdle is linguistic, rather than ideological. Answers tend to focus on the linguistic gap inherent in the encounter, rather than on other questions, such as identity: 'the patient does not understand what he [the doctor] says and vice versa.'  
UIEP20

Indeed some informants rationalise that it proves impossible to provide a service to MIL monolinguals because of the language gap: 'there are often misunderstandings, if not a complete lack of comprehension altogether;' UIEP3 and that 'in those situations they don't get seen because they don't know how to say what's wrong with them, they don't know how to speak Spanish.'  
UIEP14 As far as the doctor or healthcare worker is concerned, 'they can't help them 100% as they should because they don't understand each other.'  
UIEP15

In order to avoid such outcomes, informants report that 'they would have to have someone or a person who knows both languages,' CPF1 which in effect means that 'there must always be an interpreter in those cases.'  
CPF13 Faced with such a situation, MIL speakers take matters into their own hands, and try to ensure that 'when they go to the doctor, they look for someone who speaks both languages well so that the doctor and the patient are on the same wavelength.'  
CPF46

Therefore, although problematic, the situation can usually be de-problematised by the actions of the service user the cooperation of bilinguals, since they can ‘communicate with other people.’<sup>CPF45</sup> Indeed, one informant comments that: ‘it’s not a problem because there is always someone who speaks Spanish and also knows how to speak Totonac and they can help that person so that the doctor can understand everything.’<sup>CPF 23</sup> This comment is interesting since it both supports and undermines its own message. On the one hand it is suggestive that bilingualism is widespread; at the same time MIL monolingualism clearly persists to the extent that bilinguals are accustomed and willing to offer ad-hoc interpretation. Furthermore, this type of intervention is conceptualised as an act of assistance to MIL speakers who, for their part, strategise around inherent problems of service provision. That these strategies should become regarded and depicted as routine and unremarkable aspects of everyday life, is therefore testimony to both the existence of a linguistic gap in service provision, and the capacity of the community to routinely bridge this gap themselves.

Although the comment is neutral in tone and not judgemental of MIL speakers, it does depart from the assumption that the linguistic deficit sits with the MIL speaker, who requires (and usually secures) linguistic assistance. As another explains: ‘maybe the doctor might understand a few words in Totonac, but the person won’t understand him speaking Spanish.’<sup>CPF14</sup> By contrast, other informants lend focus to the fact that service providers ‘do not understand original languages,’<sup>UIEP12; UIEP42</sup> and make comments which, by accident or by design, locate the linguistic deficit with the service provider: ‘doctors don’t speak the language so they don’t understand what they’re suffering with.’<sup>UIEP2</sup> Some perhaps try to rationalise this deficient situation: ‘they do not treat them [MIL monolinguals] because they don’t know what they’re saying;’<sup>UIEP35</sup> or going further, ‘they prefer not to treat them because they don’t understand their mother tongue;’<sup>UIEP8</sup> yet such comments still focus on the doctor’s inability to communicate in the local language.

Across the cohort, most informants do perceive difficulties with accessing healthcare and many frame such problems in ideological terms. For example, one clearly demarcates the linguistic and ideological aspects in order to express that social discrimination is additional to linguistic barriers: ‘communication is poor .... and there is discrimination as well.’<sup>UIEP36</sup> As seen, many employ the language of civil

rights to depict the reception of MIL speakers by healthcare services, explaining that ‘they are not given their rights’ <sup>CPF 2</sup> or not given ‘the same rights’ <sup>UIEP 7</sup> and are ‘discriminated against.’ <sup>CPF8</sup> Indeed, the term ‘discrimination’ is used more frequently by all informants in relation to these questions on health, than any other public service or social issue. UIEP students in particular make repeated mention of discrimination which can be ‘severe’ <sup>UIEP27</sup> and is faced ‘much of the time’. <sup>UIEP6;</sup> <sup>UIEP29; UIEP1</sup> The implications of these discourse choices are interesting and the subject of discussion in Chapter 5; at this stage it is noted that young MIL speakers are making use of such terms to characterise contact between healthcare professionals and MIL monolinguals. More than two thirds of informants use the term ‘discrimination’ or a cognate at least once in their answer. As one informant chooses to preface their answer: ‘The fundamental thing is that ... they [MIL speakers] are discriminated against’<sup>CPF8</sup>, while another states plainly that ‘sick people are refused their rights.’ <sup>CPF2</sup>

Similar perceptions are also conveyed in more vernacular terms. For example, informants say that ‘they are ignored’ <sup>CPF12; CPF15</sup> or ‘overlooked’<sup>CPF4</sup> or ‘not given the attention they should’ <sup>CPF27</sup> or ‘hardly ever treated.’<sup>CPF46</sup> Succinct, declarative statements make clear the link between such treatment and sociolinguistic ideologies: ‘they are ignored and not seen because they don’t speak Spanish,’ <sup>UIEP30; CPF9</sup> Comments such as ‘they are turned away’ <sup>CPF43</sup> provide precision and definition, and offer a tangible sense of the expression of otherwise intangible notions of discrimination, inequality or the denial of civil rights.

Another distinction is that whereas some informants lend more focus to the linguistic bias underpinning such attitudes, others make reference to social identities. For example, there are explanations that ‘if they don’t speak Spanish’ <sup>CPF 4</sup> or ‘do not speak Spanish well’, they suffer discrimination, sometimes to the extent that: ‘there are doctors who are strict that if a person speaks Totonac they ignore them, they turn them away.’ <sup>CPF 43</sup> Other informants, particularly UIEP students, address attitudes with references to the identity gap between victims and perpetrators: ‘it is mainly indigenous people who are discriminated against;’ <sup>CPF26</sup> perpetrated by ‘the doctors themselves,’ <sup>CPF37</sup> who ‘do not treat indigenous people properly’ <sup>UIEP 12; UIEP1; UIEP 26; UIEP 16; UIEP 23</sup> and one UIEP informant uses local idiomatic expressions to clearly distinguish

identities, reporting that hospitals give preference to *personas castellanas* [mestizos] over *gente humilde* [Totonac speakers].<sup>UIEP2</sup>

This terminology recalls the social juxtaposition of monied people with simple folk discussed in Chapter 2, but here the point of interest is the informant's contrast between being poor /speaking MIL, and having an identity (Castilian) which is Mexican, but not identifiably indigenous. It is worth remembering that most informants have parents, siblings or loved ones (i.e. shared bonds and identities) with service-users who are MIL monolingual or who lack full confidence in spoken Spanish. As such, informants literally bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between Spanish-monolingual service providers and MIL-monolingual service users, providing informal interpretation at medical appointments, as they do with teachers and education or local authorities.

In sum, whichever form of discourse is used by informants, and wherever emphasis is placed, the points of interest are, first, that an encounter with public health services implies communication difficulties. The expectation is that these will usually be addressed by service users, rather than providers, often through informal interpreting by young bilinguals (such as the informants in this study), which implies a particular standpoint on these issues. Second, a perception is widespread that non-Spanish-speakers do face discrimination, which is exercised at institutional and individual level. This denial of citizens' rights is informed by harmful sociolinguistic ideologies, and becomes translated as a contingent lack of attention to well-being.

#### **4.3.2 Identifying language policies: treatment and maltreatment**

In terms of encounters with these policies, the picture offered is mixed and nuanced. According to one informant, 'in the hospital in Huehuetla there are nurses who speak Totonac and that way they communicate with the patient.'<sup>CPF30</sup> Although the only informant to make this claim, it is important as it reminds that local young bilinguals, including CPF alumni, have the capacity to quickly change linguistic practices in healthcare. For example, CPF alumni have migrated to other towns in the sierra to train as nurses, and at the time of writing, the UIEP was making preparations for in-situ nursing training. These facts are important as they offer feasible scope and hope for the development of multilingual policies in healthcare.



Nevertheless, this informant's observation that a MIL monolingual may encounter MIL-speaking healthcare personnel in hospital is isolated. Indeed, a nurse in post at the Huehuetla/Kgoyom facility subsequently suggested that bilingual personnel could be reluctant to deploy their MIL in a professional capacity (a claim later repeated by informants in relation to Totonac-speaking police officers). As far as most informants are concerned, the more common scenario is to encounter a Spanish-monolingual environment when entering healthcare.

That said, some informants do believe that providers are making efforts to meet users' needs: 'what they [health services] do as well is find an interpreter who speaks both languages, if the person needing help only speaks Totonac',<sup>CPF31</sup> Some doctors are said to 'behave well and find an interpreter,' and they look for help so that they can 'translate into Spanish what they [the patient] means,' or else 'find other ways so that they understand each other.'<sup>UIEP37</sup> In other words, there is a willingness to expend effort, even if practices are not formal, consistent, or universal. As one informant explains: 'they try to understand them; if they can't, they look for an interpreter - but not everywhere, not in hospitals.'<sup>CPF 38</sup> This final caveat is echoed by another who notes that 'traditional medicine clinics have translators and interpreters, but not hospitals.'<sup>UIEP28</sup>

For other informants, hospital doctors are perceived as insistent that 'whatever they [MIL speakers] want to say, they should say it in Spanish because they [the doctors] don't understand Totonac.'<sup>IRT1</sup> Indeed, they 'just ignore them',<sup>CPF 29</sup> and this duality of approach is echoed by others: 'Sometimes they discriminate against them or they can tell them to bring someone who speaks Spanish.'<sup>IRT7</sup>

It is in this context that most informants report ways in which MIL speakers search for their own solutions: 'what they've always done is look for an interpreter',<sup>CPF21; UIEP 10; UIEP40</sup> so that 'they are able to communicate with the doctors.'<sup>UIEP11</sup> It is common for MIL- speakers to 'look for an interpreter in the hospital'<sup>CPF17</sup> which, in effect, means they may simply 'look around for someone who happens to be present to translate what they are trying to say.'<sup>UIEP34 37</sup> Another informant suggests that 'when older folks go to the doctor, they always go with their grandchildren or children so that they can talk to the doctor, or else the doctor hires an assistant who knows how to speak both languages and that way he can do his job.'<sup>CPF9</sup>



According to census data, the MIL-monolingual population is comprised primarily of the elderly and young children; however, the questionnaire data suggests that most informants have at least one parent lacking competence or confidence in Spanish - all of these will be aged under 50, and most under 40. Interpretation is therefore is clearly a predictable, recurrent and sizeable issue. As informants observe, no-one will understand each other ‘unless the Totonac takes an interpreter’<sup>CPF19</sup> and so MIL speakers ‘are asked to take interpreters with them to speak to them’,<sup>UIEP30</sup> and doctors routinely ask ‘if the person has a family member who can speak Spanish and maybe he or she can help.’<sup>IRT1</sup> MIL monolinguals take it upon themselves to ensure that ‘someone helps to tell them what the doctor is saying,’<sup>UIEP11</sup> speaks on their behalf to the doctor, and will ‘express for them what they are trying to say.’<sup>CPF34</sup> As one informant concludes bluntly: ‘if they can’t find someone who speaks Spanish then they will ignore them, *guaranteed* [their emphasis].’<sup>CPF32</sup>

The latter comment neatly encapsulates the core of most informant reports: the onus falls on MIL monolinguals to resolve communication difficulties or else be turned away by service providers. This simple observable fact communicates language ideologies and sociolinguistic order more powerfully than any rhetoric, and is a crucial factor to consider when discussing valorisation of MIL, MIL-speakers language behaviours, and factors driving MIL loss and maintenance. However informants narrate or evaluate provision, the fundamental message is the same: it is the responsibility of MIL speakers to pursue effective communication, and their responsibility it breaks down.

Breakdowns in communication lead to disengagement by the service provider with the user: ‘there are many doctors who, since they can’t speak Totonac, all they do is just not treat a person who can’t speak Spanish.’<sup>CPF9</sup> The concern of another informant is that ‘maybe they don’t get the right medicine because when the patient explains their symptoms to the doctor he is going to have trouble understanding them.’<sup>UIEP22</sup> The anxiety is perceptible: as another explains ‘they don’t make a proper diagnosis of what the person is suffering because the doctors base everything on what people tell them.’<sup>UIEP31</sup> In fact, the situation is so serious, according to one informant, that ‘most of the time patients die because they don’t know how to explain what’s wrong with them.’<sup>UIEP18</sup>

Meanwhile, one informant notes that ‘sometimes they are treated badly but there are also people who show them support, such as nurses and security guards;’<sup>UIEP 41</sup> this duality and inconsistency of treatment, alluded to earlier, is a theme repeated by informants. For example, ‘there are doctors who treat them badly and others who don’t.’<sup>IRT1</sup> Such answers suggest informants perceive almost the same likelihood of encountering maltreatment as ‘proper’ treatment: ‘in some places they treat them properly and in others they treat them badly.’<sup>CPF31</sup> In terms of defining these concepts more precisely, informants are less explicit about positive behaviours, although efforts at communication on the part of providers are often mentioned: ‘they look for someone who speaks the original language to translate into Spanish’<sup>UIEP19</sup> These actions are then juxtaposed with negative behaviours: ‘sometimes the people treating them try to find ways to understand them’<sup>UIEP24</sup> notes one informant, before explaining that ‘there are other times they couldn’t care less.’<sup>UIEP24</sup>

Such apparent lack of concern and such inconsistency, form part of a range of behaviours and attitudes which informants associate with being treated ‘badly.’ As one clarifies, ‘some treat you well but others treat you with disdain.’<sup>UIEP 25</sup> Disdain emerges as an important recurring theme and constituent of maltreatment, that is, the failure to treat MIL speakers ‘as they should be.’<sup>UIEP29</sup> Maltreatment then means they ‘do not receive a good service,’<sup>IRT5</sup> or even ‘appropriate treatment;’<sup>UIEP 27</sup> instead they are treated ‘differently.’<sup>CPF11</sup> and ‘unequally compared to others who speak Spanish.’<sup>UIEP 24</sup>

As mentioned earlier, many UIEP informants comment on maltreatment using the discourse of rights and entitlement to services. They indicate that treatment is improperly denied, or not administered ‘in line with what they [the patient] are really suffering from’<sup>UIEP4</sup> and patients do not receive the attention or treatment ‘which their illness warrants.’<sup>UIEP16</sup> One informant associates such ‘discrimination’ with ‘corruption,’<sup>UIEP17</sup> i.e. that policies depart from accepted standards and protocols. When treatment is secured, it is perceived as reluctant and inadequate. Time and attention are given ‘begrudgingly,’<sup>CPF36; UIEP32</sup> medical consultations are ‘incomplete;’<sup>UIEP17</sup> doctors ‘don’t treat them properly’<sup>CPF20</sup> and can ‘find it easier to just tell them that nothing is wrong.’<sup>UIEP9</sup> Either they give them ‘any old medicine’<sup>UIEP42</sup> or else ‘they don’t give the patient the medicines they need.’<sup>UIEP23</sup> In worst case scenarios, MIL-speakers simply ‘don’t get medical help’<sup>CPF12 CPF4</sup> because they are

‘refused treatment.’<sup>CPF27</sup> At a time when they are vulnerable, service is withheld and accepted standards of care are lacking.

Another constituent of maltreatment frequently mentioned is that MIL speakers are not received in turn and not attended with transparency or due protocol. MIL-monolingual clients are apparently made to wait, sometimes ‘until last,’<sup>UIEP30, UIEP33</sup> while Spanish speakers are seen ahead of them. Informants report that ‘they tell them to just wait for a while.’<sup>CPF43</sup> but what transpires is that ‘they don’t see them later.’<sup>CPF40</sup> The language gap is perceived as an excuse<sup>UIEP32</sup> or clients are sent away on pretexts: ‘they trick them, telling them to come back another day.’<sup>CPF27</sup> They may even be told to ‘go and find one of their traditional doctors or healers,’<sup>CPF18</sup> a provocative comment. In effect, informants complain of being passed over, cast aside, and overlooked. Doctors simply ‘ignore them or leave them until later’<sup>CPF41</sup> and, in effect, their person is unseen. Yet, at the same time, disdainful exchanges, acts of ‘scolding’<sup>UIEP2</sup> or humiliation take place ‘in front of people.’<sup>CPF33</sup> In effect, their person is not visible, until suddenly cast into a harsh spotlight.

In all these, the perception is that a linguistic gap is being exploited, rather than bridged, and when theorising this discrimination and maltreatment, informants conclude that ‘people who don’t speak Spanish’ are treated ‘very badly.’<sup>CPF4 UIEP8; UIEP39; UIEP29</sup> By way of illustration, many report that health services turn away MIL monolinguals, and some comment that these dismissals are accompanied by a ‘telling off’<sup>CPF18; UIEP2</sup> that is, verbal assault, and that ‘doctors get angry.’<sup>UIEP33</sup>

Such public upbraiding can be interpreted as acts which convey authority, an exercise of power through verbal assault, legitimised by prevailing ideological context. In a multilingual context, where language management is implicated in the distribution of social power, both isolated acts and generalised policies can function to consolidate or challenge paradigmatic relations. Such acts connote harm: as one informant comments, MIL monolinguals ‘are treated cruelly.’<sup>UIEP26</sup>

The implications of such perceptions are important to keep in mind and return to in further discussion (Chapter 5); meanwhile, the focus here is on language management in terms of constituting treatment and maltreatment (not merely choices of language code), and expressed by both commissions and omissions. Verbal assault, for example, is clearly the commission of an act of maltreatment; however,

maltreatment can often result from both wilful and less-conscious acts of omission. Several informants state that non-Spanish speakers simply ‘are not let in’ UIEP5; UIEP32 ; UIEP6 and that the main problem is ‘they don’t treat you,’ UIEP36 or: ‘they don’t give them medicine even when they are seriously ill.’ CPF10

In theorising why such practices occur, one informant explains that rather than efforts being made to bridge the communication gap, ‘they are discriminated against for speaking Totonac.’ CPF 10 This sentiment is echoed by other informants who note that ‘they are more interested in people who only speak Spanish;’ CPF 26 and who perceive that ‘people who speak Spanish get seen to quickly.’ CPF 43 This skewed access to treatment is theorised in terms of rights in the following comment: ‘as far as I’m concerned they have no right to turn away indigenous people.’ CPF43 Others modify similar statements with explanations: ‘if they ask for some medicine and the doctor does not understand them, that is why [they turn them away].’ CPF6

This latter comment communicates two parallel truths. It rationalises a negation by the provider in terms of a failure on the part of the service user (to adopt the language of treatment). At the same time it confirms the omission on the part of providers (which constitutes maltreatment). As one informant makes clear ‘there are no interpreters in the hospitals or health centres’ UIEP30 , and such omission, in a community where MIL-monolingualism applies to at least a third of the population, can be regarded as more than oversight.

### **4.3.3 Hypothesising multilingual healthcare**

With these observations in mind, the topic turns to the sociolinguistic rights of MIL speakers’ and on the extent to which healthcare and public services could or should be recast or redefined as multilingual. What emerges is that the foremost concern of informants remains the well-being of MIL speakers, expressed as access to due care and respect.

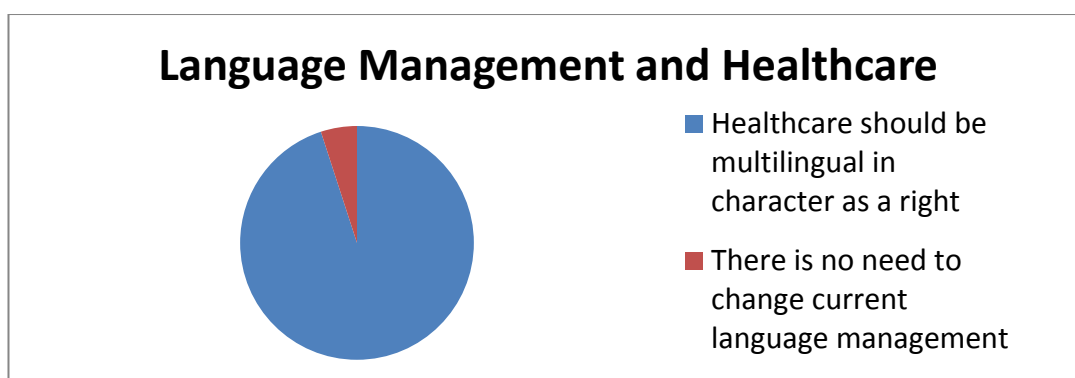
Informants are asked ‘should a speaker of Totonac [MIL] have the right to insist that either medical attention is provided in Totonac [his/her own language] or that health services provide an interpreter? Specifically, informants must decide whether rights to medical attention in MIL should correspond only to MIL-speaking communities, or extend throughout the state of Puebla or the whole Mexican republic.

Alternatively, informants may reject the notion entirely, or the premise of the question, and offer their own statement of rights instead. There is debate whether linguistic rights should be personal in character as well as territorial (see Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012), and the topic re-emerges in discussion in Chapter 5; at this point, informants are questioned as to whether rights follow the individual, or pertain to the MIL-speaking territory.

In terms of linguistic rights, the policies of Spanish monolingualism which currently prevail in public healthcare are rejected almost unanimously (95%) Instead, young MIL-speakers hypothesise a multilingual character to healthcare (see Figure 4.4 (below) and believe MIL monolinguals should have the right to medical attention in MIL . Treatment in one's own language, as a civic or linguistic right, would go some way towards addressing discrimination and difficulties faced by MIL speakers.

How this multilingualism might be facilitated generates difference of opinion. Some argue that 'medical facilities should provide interpreters' <sup>CPF2</sup> and that it falls to providers to offer 'someone to help them translate so as to make treatment easier.'<sup>IRT7</sup> Others argue this can be best achieved by MIL-speaking medical personnel and that: 'if they hire nurses who can speak in Totonac as well as Spanish, then they can provide a better service.'<sup>CPF24</sup> Incidentally, it is interesting that the opinion is framed in terms of well-being, i.e. improved care, a theme which is picked up again shortly. In terms of the extent of rights, some believe these correspond only to their local communities, while others extend them to the entire republic. Either way, support in the cohort for multilingual healthcare is overwhelming.

**Figure 4.4 shows support for change in language management in healthcare**

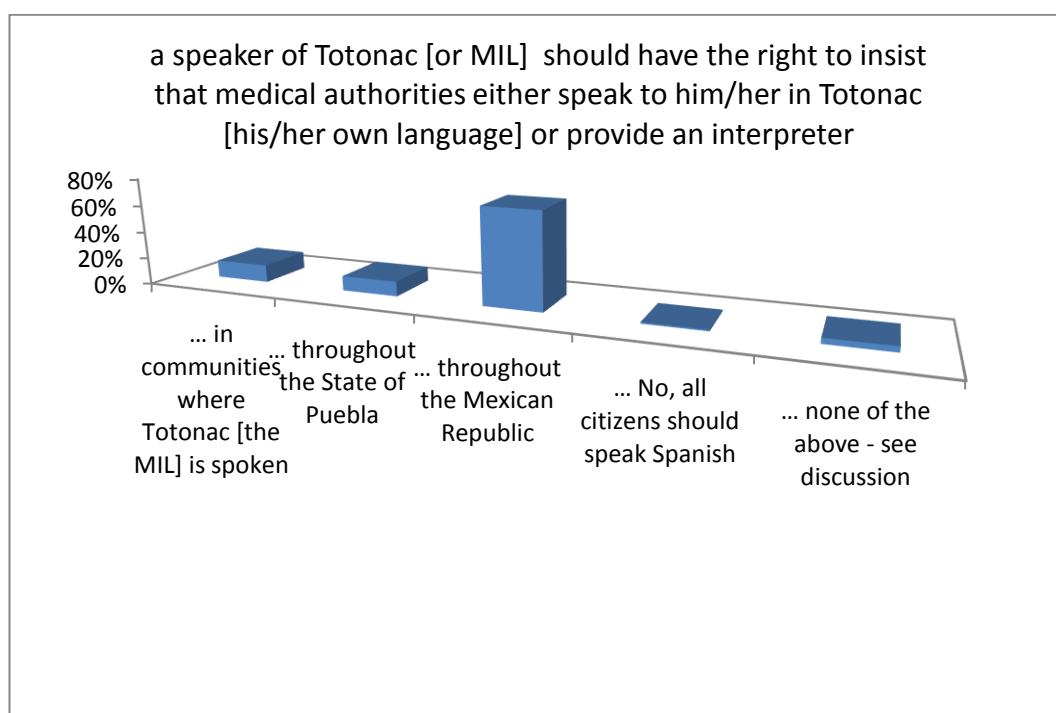


The extent of support is so great that it raises two competing considerations. First, the need to allow for the ‘researcher effect’ in this outcome, and to show consequent restraint when drawing conclusions; at the same time the need to admit and fully appreciate the outcome, and what it communicates about how the lived experience of the embodied MIL-speaker is perceived. This in turn has highly significant implications for the language attitudes and behaviours of young bilinguals, who perceive how language management in public services compounds social marginalisation and linguistic minoritisation. In a very personal and tangible sense, informants bear witness to the sociolinguistic order and its effects. Care and treatment or neglect and maltreatment, are not abstract notions in their lives.

At the same time, translanguaging practices form part of daily routines and patterns of interaction in their families and communities. Multilingualism in public services may appear to be an unnecessarily complex or costly proposal to others (such as Spanish monolinguals or public service managers). However, among young bilinguals, skilled in switching between linguistic and cultural codes and lifestyles, it should be less surprising that it appears a feasible and just proposition.

In terms of the scope of linguistic rights, a clear majority (more than two-thirds) believe these should apply to the whole Mexican Republic, rather than be restricted to the state of Puebla or to MIL-predominant communities. The breakdown of opinion on this issue is shown in Figure 4.5 (below).

**Figure 4.5 Should MIL-speakers have the right to medical attention in MIL, and how far should such rights extend?**



Of note is that ‘Puebla’ is not an especially meaningful concept for respondents. As with earlier findings on education, either the local MIL-predominant community or the Mexican Republic are considered more valid boundaries. Nevertheless, Puebla authorities have a crucial function in the provision of public services and the exercise of language management and rights in MIL-speaking communities.

At the same time, the apparent consensus for multilingual healthcare throughout the Republic is belied by an important divergence of opinion between the cohorts. As with the earlier question, opinion at UIEP is much more uniform, with close to 90% support for this option. However, at CPF, only around half of informants choose this option. Although it is still the majority opinion (gaining twice as much support as the second preference), it clearly does not capture the same outright level of support as at UIEP. Instead, CPF opinion - younger and more local - is more widely distributed. Notably, over ten times as many CPF as UIEP informants would restrict linguistic rights to MIL-predominant communities (11% compared to 1%).

Moreover, while only one UIEP informant chose ‘none of the above’, almost a quarter of CPF did so and instead chose to write out their own personalised statements of rights: of these statements, two-thirds in effect support the majority opinion. However, this rejection of stylised opinions, and desire to articulate one’s views in precise terms, is a meaningful act. It conveys understanding and engagement with the topic, and a disposition to theorisation. These outcomes are important since they speak to the value of the chosen research method, and more importantly, to discussion of the participation of local young MIL bilinguals in policy formulation.

Regarding the remaining third of statements, these do not directly answer the question posed, and yet still provide valuable data for understanding language management in healthcare. Rather than directly hypothesise multilingualism and linguistic rights, they focus primarily on strategies or solutions which already exist. For example, one suggests there is no need for change and ‘no need to insist or complain, because there may already be a doctor in the facility who speaks Totonac.’<sup>CPF23</sup> This sentiment is echoed by another who notes that ‘most people who live here speak both languages.’<sup>CPF39</sup> Although the first comment speaks of bilingual personnel, and the second of bilingual patients, both succeed in affirming the multilingual character of communities, and the contingent value of bilingualism. Indeed, another informant suggests it is immaterial whether it is the doctor or patient who provides interpretation, since both are good solutions, while another insists they can handle any doctor who ‘behaves arrogantly’<sup>CPF45</sup> because of language difference.

In terms of this language difference, it is argued that ‘we should have the right to speak lots of languages, not just Totonac and Spanish, but they should respect us.’<sup>CPF3</sup> As this comment illustrates, linguistic rights are one issue, but human rights and human welfare are another. In fact, whichever option informants choose in response to this question, and however healthcare policy and linguistic rights are subsequently conceptualised, the majority of their concluding comments on MIL and healthcare place greater emphasis on the well-being of MIL-speakers and social, rather than specifically linguistic issues. Their content echoes the earlier concerns expressed for equality, respect and fairness: ‘maybe they don’t understand them, but they should get more respect.’<sup>UIEP38</sup> In other words, communication difficulties do not legitimise a failure of regard, and ‘everyone should be treated the same, even if



they speak Totonac.<sup>'CPF32</sup> As another remarks: 'we all have the right to health, just as we are,'<sup>'CPF15</sup> another interesting turn of phrase which echoes the preceding call for treatment without discrimination. Even if it is not a serious emergency, says another, all persons should have the same right to receive medical attention: 'whatever people speak, it shouldn't matter.'<sup>'CPF7</sup>

In sum, informants recall and reject harmful ideologies and policies in healthcare, and instead hypothesise changed sociolinguistic practices which would offer redress to such social and linguistic discrimination, and could protect and preserve the well-being of MIL-speakers.

#### **4.3.4 Conclusion: ideologies and policies of MIL in healthcare**

Informants have painted a mixed picture of access to healthcare for non-Spanish speakers. Perceptions are not uniformly negative, and young people depict their language community as pragmatic and resourceful in dealing with communication difficulties. However, serious concerns are raised, with recurrent mention of variability and inconsistency in service provision. Therefore, a clear finding is that young bilingual MIL speakers do perceive discrimination towards the linguistic culture in the domain of healthcare. This is attested by a perceived lack of due care and respect, and by the precariousness associated with accessing timely and appropriate medical attention.

This inconsistency can be contrasted with the predictable constants which are observed: first, the responsibility borne by MIL-speakers (i.e. bilinguals) to continually resolve communication difficulties with monolingual health service providers; second, the constituent elements of sociolinguistic discrimination which MIL-speakers can encounter. These elements include: being overlooked, dismissed from view, or remaining unseen until publically embarrassed; being misled or exploited; and being differentiated from Spanish speakers in terms of accessing due care or treatment. Such maltreatment is evidenced by isolated commissions, such as verbal assault, or more generalised omissions and oversights which express prevailing sociolinguistic order, and the distribution of power between parties.

MIL-speakers, whether bilingual or monolingual, have become accustomed to strategizing and negotiating access to healthcare and other public services which fail to reflect the linguistic profile of their communities. The risk is that the success of these adaptive strategies can obscure the need for political redress, since at surface level, difficulties are apparently resolved (and sociolinguistic order is maintained). Yet, when one adopts the perspective of well-being in terms of ease of access and the experience of treatment and maltreatment, this reveals the consequences of language ideologies and policies for MIL communities.

These impacts on well-being relate to a linguistic culture which is indigenous to the country, autochthonous of the region, numerically predominant locally, and which is more often the sole language of the two groups most affected by issues of access to healthcare provision, i.e. the very young and old. It is undesirable if current language policy indirectly jeopardises the vitality and valorisation of a local indigenous language and culture; of more acute, urgent concern, however, is if health and well-being are placed at risk.

This study deals with perceptions among MIL speakers of their sociolinguistic context; what findings show is that it is the perception *of* MIL speakers (by others) that is crucial. Too often MIL-speakers are simply *not perceived*, whether by service providers or policy planners. It is not only isolated incidents which belittle speakers, but routine, everyday acts of oversight and disregard by individuals and institutions mean a language community can become minoritised, despite collective numbers. Therefore, when theorising policy change, it is not a question of adapting services to a new situation or changed needs, but rather one of perceiving and acknowledging the linguistic profile of the communities they have always been engaged to serve.

## **Chapter 4.4 Police and civil authorities**

This section deals with young bilinguals' perceptions of the treatment of MIL speakers by police and the linguistic rights of MIL speakers in relation to policing. Broad patterns of opinion are followed by detailed analysis and interpretation of findings. The text is structured to lend substantial space to informants' theorisations of context. It closes with their conceptualisations of linguistic rights, and highlights data and argument that merit further discussion in respect of the themes of language valorisation, minoritisation and policing.

### **Patterns of response by informants**

The first observation is that engagement with questions on the topic is good, attested to by a very high response rate, by lengthy, detailed answers, and by their differentiated content. Responses adopt a range of discourse styles, meaning answers are noticeably distinct, both one from another, and from answers to earlier questions on education and health. Evaluative language is prevalent, as is a willingness to theorise or rationalise context alongside narration or description. Although only asked initially to recount what they know or believe to occur when MIL monolinguals interact with the police, many immediately discuss the prevailing ideological context of such encounters. The wording of questions is ambiguous, meaning respondents can and do interpret them either by considering occasions when MIL-speakers need to approach the police for help, or when they are approached by the police. Likewise, some informants comment on how police should behave, rather than on how they do behave, itself suggestive of a willingness to theorise issues, outwith their own experience.

The analysis identifies emergent themes, convergent and divergent views, nuances in perspective, situating these along a spectrum of opinion. In common with discussion of healthcare, there is some distinction between the younger, more local Totonac-speakers at CPF, compared to older MIL-speakers of more diverse backgrounds at UIEP. Just under a third of CPF respondents believe that the linguistic gap with police authorities either does not generate problems of significant mention, or that these can be resolved by MIL-speakers without cause for concern; at UIEP this figure drops to just under a quarter. In both cohorts there is discussion of the disconnect between public institutions and communities primarily in terms of

language; however, in contrast to healthcare, many more informants shift the focus beyond language difference towards the distribution and exercise of power. Policing is inevitably a complex and provocative topic, and reflections on individual and collective welfare, safety, security, and access to justice bring issues of rights and responsibilities into greater focus.

#### 4.4.1 Linguistic difference: interaction and inaction

When asked the first question: ‘what happens when the Police [Civil Authorities] deal with Totonac [MIL] speakers who do not speak Spanish?’ informants make clear that the linguistic gulf between parties is so great that ‘neither side understand each other.’<sup>UIEP10</sup> Most focus on the linguistic limitations of the authorities: ‘if the policeman doesn’t speak [the local language] there can be no fluid communication.’<sup>UIEP12</sup> and despite the fact that ‘many people in Huehuetla speak Totonac’,<sup>CPF37</sup> the police ‘understand nothing’<sup>CPF14 UIEP42</sup> of the language. Moreover, the authorities ‘insist that they always speak only in Spanish’<sup>CPF7</sup> and ‘they get mad with them if they don’t speak in Spanish’.<sup>CPF38</sup> A minority focus on the fact that it is the MIL-speaker who ‘isn’t able to communicate, that’s why.’<sup>CPF6</sup> Either way, without interpreters there is ‘absolutely no understanding on either side,’<sup>CPF33</sup> the result is ‘confusion.’<sup>UIEP36</sup> and there is no chance for ‘cross-cultural dialogue.’<sup>UIEP13</sup>

Some informants rationalise the inevitable problems: ‘there are disputes because they can’t get along, they don’t understand each other and it’s easy to lose patience’<sup>UIEP25</sup> and arguments easily ensue: ‘they start arguing and the policeman can’t understand what the indigenous people are saying.’<sup>UIEP21</sup> More specifically, the police officer ‘might get offended because he won’t be able to understand him and he might think that he’s lying to him maybe.’<sup>CPF1</sup> In other cases, the police do ‘try to understand what he or she is saying but there are times when they just ignore them altogether.’<sup>UIEP34</sup> This latter option - simply to abandon communication altogether – is one which is repeatedly mentioned by informants: ‘Only a few police officers look for interpreters; others just don’t bother to deal with the situation, they leave everything unresolved.’<sup>UIEP30</sup> If there is simply ‘no understanding of that person.’<sup>CPF24; CPF34</sup> then the consequence is that ‘the police just don’t argue with that person.’<sup>CPF17</sup> As one informant succinctly answers when asked what happens: ‘nothing happens.’<sup>CPF23</sup>

This absence of action or reaction, and the lack of resolution, can be difficult to process conceptually, especially by observers from outside the context, or by those who share cultural identity with the gatekeepers of access to key public institutions. When expectations of rights or access are unmet, denied or obstructed, the gulf between expectations and outcomes can become the site of ideological and political struggle, implying a response, if not a remedy. What is challenging to process is an apparent absence (at surface level) of either response, or of remedy, or perhaps of expectations.

Nevertheless, engagement with the exclusion and minoritisation of language communities demands scrutiny of status quo. To persist and survive, linguistic communities continually negotiate continuity and change. In these findings, experiential experts attest to sometimes not seeking, and often not finding, public service responses to their needs in the form of access or rights. The point to be carried forward to discussion (Chapter 5) is that an absence of communication, interaction, action or reaction also constitutes a sociolinguistic outcome.

Meanwhile, a depiction of mutual incomprehension, or dichotomy between Spanish monolingual police officers and MIL monolingual citizens is contested by other informants who argue that ‘most people speak both languages.’<sup>CPF39</sup> Bilingualism is perceived to be so prevalent among MIL-speakers that there is no basis for raising concern at the Spanish monolingual character of institutions such as the police. Bilinguality is even regarded by some as indicative of economic progress: ‘nowadays most people are educated; it’s not like before when the communities were really poor.’<sup>UIEP11</sup>

Reports also emerge in the data of MIL-speaking police officers. In healthcare, there is mention, albeit it limited, of MIL-speaking staff. However, there are some important distinctions to be made regarding incidence and function. In healthcare, MIL-speakers are characterised as nurses, security guards, and ancillary staff, but not doctors or consultants. Even if doctors might ‘understand a few words of Totonac,’<sup>CPF\*\*</sup> they are never reported as L1 MIL speakers. In contrast, more respondents either imply or clearly state that front-line police officers are also L1 speakers of MIL, particularly Totonac. As one informant suggests: ‘communication is not a problem if the policeman speaks the mother tongue;’<sup>UIEP 12</sup> while another

Huehuetla/Kgoyom informant clarifies: ‘the police around here are also Totonac.’<sup>CPF15</sup> Since completing fieldwork, at least one of the Totonac-speaking respondents is now a police officer, a coincidence supporting the claim by another that ‘pretty much the majority of police know how to speak Totonac because they are from the communities as well.’<sup>CPF9</sup>

The finding that more mention is made of MIL/Spanish bilingual police officers than of bilingual medical personnel is important. Even if, in numerical terms, it is mentioned in only a minority of responses, it nonetheless is significant in highlighting further the critical function of language policy in public institutions. That is, despite the fact that MIL-speakers indeed join the ranks of the police, and despite the language profile of communities being served, MIL are apparently not employed during police operations and interactions. As one informant reports ‘even if they understand Totonac they deny it, and when you talk to them in Totonac they act as if they don’t understand, and that makes it difficult for the person to explain their case.’<sup>IRT5</sup> Such testimony warrants further discussion in Chapter 5 since it speaks to the power of institutional language policy to determine individual language practices and to mould language attitudes.

### **Linguistic difference: context or pretext?**

Whether or not language knowledge is shared, the gap in language use between citizens and police authorities is considered from different perspectives. Many comment that ‘the most likely solution,’<sup>UIEP22</sup> is that ‘an interpreter will be found’<sup>UIEP11</sup> in order to ensure that ‘they can understand each other.’<sup>UIEP40</sup> As seen in this answer, it is not always specified who takes the initiative, but as seen in healthcare, MIL speakers are accustomed to strategizing interactions with public services and authorities: ‘if and when such cases occur,’<sup>CPF24</sup> that MIL-speakers ‘don’t know how to speak Spanish,’<sup>CPF31</sup> they will address the issue by ‘taking a person with them who does speak both Totonac and Spanish,’<sup>CPF24</sup> ‘so that they can translate’,<sup>CPF31; CPF19</sup> ‘and help them,’<sup>CPF23</sup> ‘and that way get things resolved.’<sup>CPF21</sup> Indeed, for this purpose, ‘each community chooses a Juez de Paz [Justice of the Peace] so that they can translate for them.’<sup>CPF9</sup> This honorary, civilian office provides a bridge between the authority of one’s own cultural and linguistic community and the federal or national authority. Despite the different strategies, these comments maintain focus on the language knowledge and response of MIL-speakers, rather than police officers.

In terms of police interpretation, it may be that first they ‘try to understand the person who doesn’t speak Spanish with signs or gestures,’<sup>CPF25</sup> but if this does not succeed, they have ‘no option’<sup>CPF37</sup> but to search for and ‘find someone who speaks both languages.’<sup>CPF45; 28;17</sup> Going further, it is asserted that ‘they [MIL speakers] have the right to an interpreter or in special cases a lawyer’<sup>UIEP 5</sup>, a claim both supported and qualified by another’s report that ‘in the state of Puebla there are interpreters speaking the mother tongue.’<sup>UIEP 41</sup> As with healthcare, there is a perception of inconsistency in the scope or extent of such provision: ‘some courts have translators and interpreters in original languages, but not all of them.’<sup>UIEP 28</sup> and moreover, ‘they try to find an interpreter but most of the times they just put them in front of the judges.’<sup>UIEP 3</sup> However, there is a perception that the situation is substantially improved: ‘nowadays rights are respected ... there are interpreters... which is a good thing.’<sup>UIEP 41</sup>

As will become evident, the positive evaluation above is a minority opinion; nonetheless it holds importance for a number of reasons. First, it was made by a UIEP student, and may reflect that the UIEP actively promotes government-sponsored training for interpreters and translators, assisting students to pursue official accreditation. Indeed, the UIEP cohort more often comments specifically on interpreting.

However, two organisations currently collaborating closely with national government to deliver such policy contradict that meaningful change is occurring.<sup>190</sup> Instead, they depict a continuing absence of interpretation for MIL-speakers in custody, which they equate to inadequate protection of civilians. Taking data from the 2011 *Censo Penitenciario* or official Prison Census, they allege that at least 96% of incarcerated MIL-speakers do not in fact have access to an interpreter. Furthermore, of those interpreters who do intervene for MIL-speakers, 90% have no specific or accredited training, beyond a short general induction delivered by voluntary organisations.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>190</sup> The government quango Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CDI) who administer the policy; see <http://www.gob.mx/cdi> and the civilian NGO Centro Penitenciario Indígena de Asesoría, Defensa y Traducción (Cpiade) who intervene with MIL-speakers in the justice system; see <http://www.cdi.gob.mx/cepiadet/colaboraciones.html>

<sup>191</sup> See speech by Edith Macías of CPIADE at the First National Conference of Interpreters and Translators of Languages other than Spanish, held in in 2013 in the city of Oaxaca; reported on 25th October 2013 by Eugenio Zamorano in <http://www.diariodemexicousa.com/indigenas-presos-no-hablan-espanol/>

In other words, what is actually being modified in the environment is not the nature of a sociolinguistic problem, or strategies of response to it, but rather the terms of the discourse around it. Likewise, there appears to be a greater consciousness of the issues and disposition for their discussion. In this respect, informants' comments are reminiscent of earlier findings on bilingual and intercultural education, insofar as they attest to a growing awareness of discursive shift concerning linguistic rights, even if not borne out by personal experience of changed practices.

The (albeit minority) perception of positive ideological and political change in language management in relation to policing therefore provides reference point for a spectrum of opinion. At one end lies this belief that authorities are beginning to acknowledge a linguistic gulf between themselves and the communities they serve, and are seeking solutions to it; entirely juxtaposed is a more widespread view that both the linguistic and civil rights of MIL-speakers are disregarded: 'as far as I can see, the authorities discriminate against Totonacs.'<sup>CPF46 & 192</sup> The language of civil rights is used repeatedly and 'discrimination' is perceived either 'in some places'<sup>UIEP20</sup> or 'most of the time.'<sup>UIEP 27</sup>

Communication difficulties are viewed more as the pretext than the context: to forms of interactions: 'with the excuse of not understanding them',<sup>UIEP33; UIEP14</sup> 'an indigenous (*originaria*) person who can't speak Spanish'<sup>UIEP27</sup> will suffer 'discriminatory acts by the authorities'<sup>193</sup> who 'oppress them'<sup>CPF13</sup>, 'violate their rights,'<sup>UIEP29</sup> and 'treat them badly for being indigenous.'<sup>CPF13</sup> Authorities 'don't take into account that they speak another language and that's how they take advantage of them.'<sup>UIEP31</sup> CPF opinion is less uniform than UIEP on this point, but the majority across both cohorts conclude that the overall experience is 'poor communication and unfair treatment,'<sup>UIEP17</sup> 'there ends up being inequality of rights'<sup>UIEP37</sup> and the 'Totonac people have their rights violated'<sup>IRT2 194</sup>

Such comments shift the discourse from solely linguistic issues of communication towards questions of identities, interactions and the exercise of power. The personhood and citizenship of the MIL-speaker comes into focus as informants narrate, deconstruct, and theorise the ideologies and policies that they believe

<sup>192</sup> CPF2, CPF2, CPF, CPF6, CPF8, CPF16, CPF37, CPF42, CPF43, IRT3 and IRT6 all use cognates

<sup>193</sup> UIEP 24 UIEP 20 UIEP2; UIEP37; UIEP 13; UIEP 17

<sup>194</sup> Also CPF2, CPF 12



prevail. The police are regarded as ‘abusing their authority’<sup>IRT7</sup> and committing ‘an injustice’<sup>IRT4</sup> towards their communities.

Most informants speak from the perspective of someone needing help from the police, rather than being pursued by them.<sup>195</sup> Most of the time ‘the authorities just ignore them,’<sup>UIEP 6</sup> such cases are ‘swept aside,’<sup>UIEP26</sup> and MIL-speakers find ‘they can’t get a proper response’.<sup>UIEP32</sup> Police treatment is repeatedly characterised as discrimination by omission and negation: ‘even if he has something important to tell them, if he can’t speak Spanish they’re never going to pay any attention to him.’<sup>CPF32</sup> The widespread perception is that MIL-speakers ‘are not taken seriously;’<sup>UIEP32; 196</sup> that their issues ‘are of no importance;’<sup>UIEP</sup> and that the authorities ‘just sweep it all under the carpet.’<sup>UIEP 22</sup> Police officers ‘don’t help or assist them;’<sup>CPF3 197; UIEP16</sup> ‘do not make arrests on their behalf,’<sup>IRT4</sup> and it seems that ‘their opinion doesn’t count for anything.’<sup>UIEP 2</sup> Similarly, if a MIL-speaker is being detained, ‘they don’t listen to their explanations.’<sup>CPF20</sup> There is frequent mention that MIL-speakers are ‘ignored,’<sup>198</sup> ‘overlooked,’<sup>199</sup> and ‘turned away.’<sup>200</sup> The term *hacer a un lado*<sup>CPF5</sup> reoccurs, a potent phrase recalling the historic corralling of farmers by landowners laying private claim to communal lands, and used to express being ‘cast aside’.

These acts of overlooking MIL-speakers or their removal from view recall the theme of negation and invisibility which emerged in relation to healthcare. The belittling practices reported there are echoed here, as police authorities oscillate between, on the one hand, a lack of regard, and on the other, a particular type - MIL-speakers are spoken to ‘with arrogance’<sup>CPF45</sup> and ‘looked upon with disdain.’<sup>CPF36</sup> The perception is that these behaviours have a targeted purpose, which is to convey a tangible sense of the power differential imbued with sociolinguistic values: MIL-speakers are ‘made’ to ‘feel inferior’<sup>201</sup> and are ‘spurned,’<sup>CPF3; CPF 6; CPF43</sup> and ‘humiliated,’<sup>202</sup> by officers

---

<sup>195</sup> On this assumption, some informants mention how they can bypass making recourse to the police and instead ‘take the person to the *juzgado indígena* [indigenous tribunal or *puchiwiwin limaxcanin*] and try to sort out the problem there.’<sup>CPF30</sup> Locally raised Totonac-speaking CPF students, who would be more familiar with such alternatives, make more mention of this.

<sup>196</sup> Also <sup>UIEP 2; UIEP 23</sup>

<sup>197</sup> Also <sup>CPF27 UIEP 16</sup>

<sup>198</sup> Also <sup>CPF27/CPF32/CPF38/CPF35</sup>

<sup>199</sup> <sup>CPF29 CPF3</sup>

<sup>200</sup> <sup>CPF3 CPF6/CPF43</sup>

<sup>201</sup> <sup>CPF27 and CPF29</sup>

<sup>202</sup> <sup>CPF22 CPF29/CPF35</sup>

who ‘are full of themselves.’<sup>IRT3</sup> The impact is palpable: ‘the person is humiliated, made to feel bad (discrimination), it happens all over the world.’<sup>UIEP 23</sup>

It is notable that humiliation recurs as a theme here and in earlier sections, with the dignity and personhood of the MIL-speaker at risk of being devalorised. There is a repeated fear that non-Spanish speakers will be treated ‘badly,’<sup>203</sup> ‘very badly’<sup>204</sup> or ‘horribly’<sup>CPF36</sup> because the police ‘have no idea how to treat people.’<sup>UIEP7</sup> The common thread is that ‘the way they are treated is abusive,’<sup>UIEP18</sup> and although, the informant above notes, it may happen everywhere, the linguistic gap is a specifically aggravating factor: ‘they can do what they like to people ... because of the lack of interpreters of all the many and different dialects [sic] in our country.’<sup>UIEP 8</sup>

One rationalisation for some behaviours is that some ‘[police] abuse them because they don’t know how to defend themselves before the authorities’<sup>UIEP9; CPF18</sup> Other informants detail how this such abuse can be experienced: ‘they’ll take advantage of the fact that he can’t speak Spanish’<sup>IRT1</sup> and take opportunities to ‘trick them.’<sup>UIEP38</sup>  
<sup>UIEP39</sup> Economic exploitation is a feature: police can ‘threaten to take them to jail’<sup>CPF7</sup> and then ‘demand money or property from them to be released’<sup>CPF12</sup> Since it is easier to ‘confuse and trick people’<sup>IRT2</sup> because of the language gap, officers ‘make the most of it’<sup>CPF36</sup> and try to ‘get as much as they can out of them’<sup>CPF36</sup> Even if the person ‘has done nothing wrong’<sup>CPF40</sup> it is believed that ‘they can easily find themselves incarcerated’<sup>205</sup> at least ‘until a family member comes for them.’<sup>CPF13</sup> The police are perceived as having ‘carte blanche’<sup>CPF22</sup> and at times consequences can be grave. For example, one attests that ‘while they are still in the community they deal with the person correctly, but once they are on the road with them and there is no-one around, they start to beat them and leave them black and blue; I know, I’ve heard it myself from someone it’s happened to.’<sup>CPF26</sup>

Despite a low incidence of specific reports of physical assault, a perception exists of heightened threat or risk towards their language community, a fact which of itself has social and linguistic consequences, disproportionate to causative incidents. Even only intermittent acts of violence can express a constancy and immutability of power

---

203 UIEP1; UIEP38; UIEP9; UIEP14; UIEP29; UIEP32

204 CPF4; CPF10; CPF11; CPF18;; CPF22; CPF29;; CPF35; CPF46; ;IRT1

205 CPF18; CPF41; IRT6

(Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002) and underpin enduringly skewed relationships between individuals, institutions and communities.

Apart from this type of acute threat, there are other implications for MIL speakers. ‘Often the accused doesn’t even understand what crime he is accused of’<sup>UIEP4</sup> and MIL-speakers can often be ‘blamed unfairly,’<sup>UIEP15</sup> ... ‘just because it has to be pinned on someone, and that’s what the officials come up with’.<sup>UIEP42</sup> It is believed that persons can be ‘found guilty without due legal process,’<sup>UIEP27</sup> and ‘taken to prison.’<sup>UIEP19</sup> In more extreme cases, a person can be ‘locked up just because no-one understands him.’<sup>UIEP35</sup> In these circumstances, it can occur that ‘innocent people find it easier to take the blame and pay up’<sup>UIEP42</sup> so as to secure their release. Likewise, since ‘there is corruption,’<sup>UIEP17</sup> police can apply ‘excessive penalties.’<sup>UIEP33</sup> In other words, serious injustices are currently sustained.

These latter findings illustrate how the discussion has travelled considerable distance from the positive evaluations heard at the beginning. It is perhaps worthwhile, therefore, recalling the opinion which contradicts depictions of harm and injustice - not to diminish or negate these findings, but rather to highlight how contradictory perceptions can exist simultaneously even on issues of such gravity. The first comment is that there is also a perception that no linguistic gulf actually exists between the police and MIL-speaking communities, either because MIL-speakers also speak Spanish, or because police officers themselves speak MIL, especially Totonac. Therefore, MIL monolingualism is relevant: ‘it isn’t such an issue ... most people speak both languages’.<sup>206</sup> Counter-arguments suggest that MIL-monolinguals may indeed understand Spanish, but not speak it well enough (or believe they do not) to fully defend and protect themselves. In addition, police officers may indeed be MIL-speakers, but in the context of policing they are not MIL-users. The extent to which this is of their own volition is one issue; another is that they do not currently engage their language skills with MIL-speakers during operations.

A second observation is that, among those who do perceive a linguistic gulf, there is also a perception that MIL-speakers usually address this themselves, and/or that the authorities increasingly take measures to engage interpreters. A final point is that the option exists to side-step the police and to pursue community alternatives for

---

206 CPF 39

conflict resolution. In discussion of the implications of these findings for the research community (in Chapter 5) there is also a need to consider the rationale for, and implications of, such concurrent, contradictory opinion.

### **(De)valorised language, (de)valorised speakers**

As discussed in Chapter 3, the data-gathering process deliberately refers to ‘speakers of MIL/Totonac’, rather than social or cultural identities, in order to communicate a distinction between personhood and language-use; nevertheless, few informants maintain this separation. In the findings generally, but even more so in these questions of policing and justice, informants collapse notions of linguistic and social identities. For example, ‘rights are violated of an indigenous person (*originaria*) who doesn’t know how to speak Spanish,’ UIEP<sup>20</sup> and they are treated badly ‘for being indigenous.’ UIEP<sup>39</sup>

In the latter quote, the adjective *originaria* designates a person, rather than a language; meanwhile, speakers are referenced in this section as *totonacas* (Totonacs) and *indígenas* (indigenous) and vernacular terms are used such as ‘people from the community’ or ‘poor people’. It is reported that ‘a humble person’ CPF<sup>22</sup> or an ‘honourable person’ CPF<sup>8</sup> ‘doesn’t have the same rights [...] that’s what police think’ CPF<sup>22</sup> ‘because of the way they dress and speak.’ CPF<sup>10</sup>

The use here of terms such as ‘poor’ and ‘humble’, which have historically been used against their communities, is reminiscent of the way terms such as *gente de dinero* (monied people) were used earlier to reference Spanish-speaking, *mestizo* social classes. To some extent, it conveys generalised perceptions of values which function in the distribution of social power. At the same time, when ‘honourable’ is correlated with ‘poor’ and ‘humble’, this also functions to re-valorise otherwise disdainful terms associated with MIL speakers. This ‘humility’ and ‘honour’ can then be contrasted with the ‘arrogance’ and ‘corruption’ of authorities such as police officers.

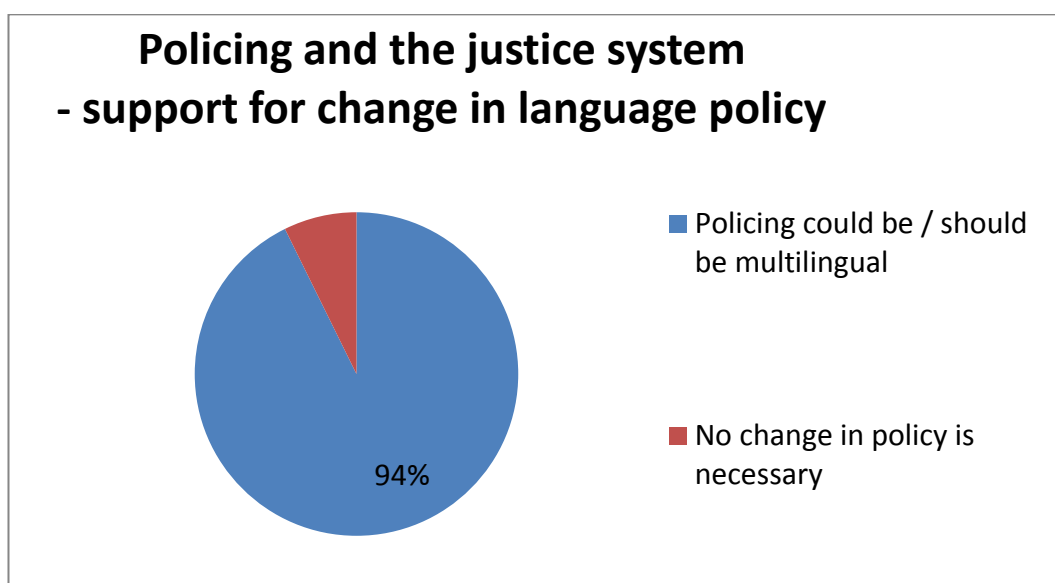
In a context of contested rights, the reappropriation of terms with pejorative values is a common mechanism to disarm harmful public discourses. It is therefore important, in discussions of language valorisation, to recall how the discourse of respondents can also function to modify existent values (see Chapter 5). Moreover, the language of informants can be viewed as closing, rather than widening, the (intention of) conceptual space between identity and language. This is achieved by lending

emphasis to the valorisation and endangerment of the embodied, identified and identifiable speaker: ‘they are discriminated because, being a person of honour, he is seen as defenceless, not as capable, apart from the power they have over him.’<sup>CPF8</sup> It is the *person* (honourable, humble, poor) speaking a MIL who can be exploited, and who is more reliant on ad-hoc strategies for protection than enshrined rights.

#### **4.4.2 Hypothesising multilingual policing and justice system: do MIL speakers have rights to demand change?**

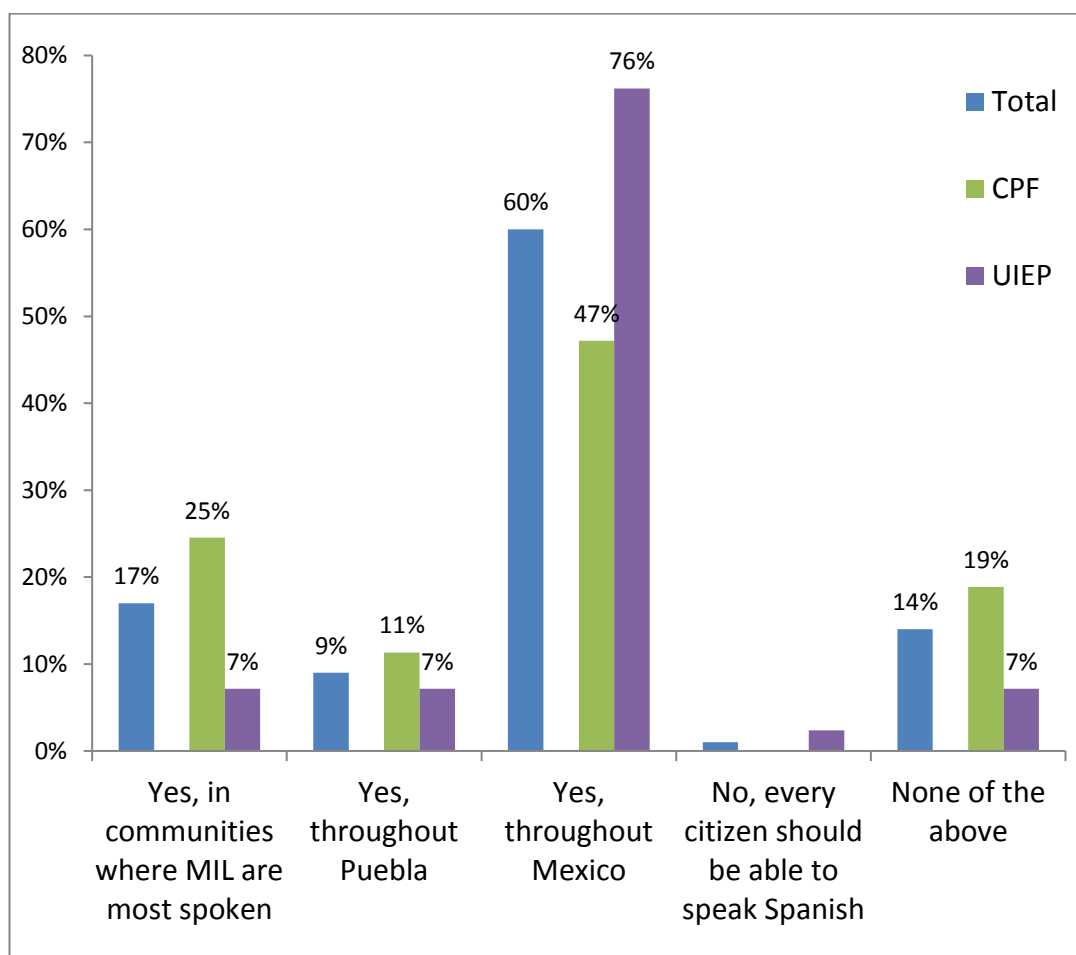
Developing this issue of strategies and enshrined rights, informants are asked to hypothesise future language policy. The question is posed: ‘should a speaker of Totonac [MIL] have the right to insist that police [civil authorities] either speak to him/her in his/her own language or else provide an interpreter?’ Informants choose from and comment upon a range of responses, or substitute these with their own statements. A clear finding is that, for young MIL bilinguals, equal rights before the law and access to justice correlate with the use of one’s mother tongue: ‘we all have the right to respect and to speak in our own language.’<sup>UIEP31</sup> In this vein, the monolingual character of current policing is overwhelmingly rejected (see Figure 4.6 below).

Figure 4.6 shows support for change in language management in policing.



Notwithstanding this apparent consensus, a more detailed breakdown of opinion reveals important nuances of perspective, and commonalities and contrasts with views of other public services. For example, when discussing the territorial extent of linguistic rights, ‘Puebla’ is again considered less meaningful a concept, (see Figure 4.7 below), with most (60%) believing such rights should apply throughout the Mexican Republic, rather than only in MIL-predominant communities (17%). However, this majority is considerably lower than the clear two-thirds majority who support a similar extension of such linguistic rights for MIL-speakers in relation to accessing public healthcare. Furthermore, although the option for national rights attracts more support than the two other territorial options combined, if the support is analysed by individual cohorts it can be seen that less than half the CPF cohort favours this option (47%), compared to over two thirds of UIEP students (76%) (see Figure 4.7 below). Generally speaking, CPF opinion is again more widely distributed between all available options, as see in relation to healthcare, while UIEP opinion appears more polarised.

**Figure 4.7 Distribution of opinion across the two cohorts in answer to the question: ‘should a speaker of Totonac [MIL] have the right to insist that police [civil authorities] either speak to him/her in his/her own language or else provide an interpreter?’**



In addition, the proportion that chooses ‘none of the above’ and composes their own statement (14%) is more substantial on this question than on others. Of particular note is that almost 20% of the CPF cohort choose to do so; a figure almost three times that of UIEP. Of these original statements (discussed below), just under half oppose the statement of linguistic rights in and policing, and almost all this dissent comes from CPF informants.

Therefore, although opposition to linguistic rights is a minority view, it is noticeable that it stems primarily from younger, local, Totonac-speaking high-school students than from older university students, with more diverse MIL profile and backgrounds.

While this opposition is small, it is literally articulated to a greater extent on this topic, because respondents are rejecting stylised opinions and writing out their own. At the very least this is indicative of a heightened anxiety to clarify personal opinions in quite precise terms, perhaps motivated by close engagement with the topic.

The tone of most statements is lacking in antagonism, ranging from pragmatic to almost conciliatory. The only two exceptions are interesting, since they share similar tone but are polarised in their views. The first argues that MIL-speakers ‘should not have to insist [on rights]; it would be better if even the authorities spoke original languages.’<sup>UIEP9</sup> The second is juxtaposed to both this view and that of the entire cohort, claiming: ‘they’ve no right to insist on anything; indigenous people don’t respect the law.’<sup>CPF45</sup> Aside from these outliers, the content of original statements largely encourage adaptation to context within existing parameters: that is, by modifying one’s perspective, or one’s language behaviour, and/or by encouraging bilingualism on both sides. In fact, when scrutinising their content, just over half actually concur with the majority view inasmuch as Spanish-monolingual policing is perceived as problematic. Nevertheless, they do not necessarily agree that specific language rights are the appropriate response: ‘it’s got nothing to do with it.’<sup>UIEP38</sup>

As discussed, MIL-speakers already feature in the ranks of front-line police officers, including within their communities of language reach, but are not using MIL in the speech domain of policing. Therefore, for some informants the issue is simply to permit and encourage, rather than sanction or suppress, MIL-use by the police: ‘if the policemen speak Totonac I think they should speak to people in Totonac.’<sup>CPF 42</sup> Likewise, another observes that ‘[current policy] is not a problem and there’s no need for anyone to complain because the policeman is not being rude, not unless he could understand Totonac and he knew what they were saying.’<sup>CPF23</sup> Both comments recall the criticality of language management, since practices have the potential to exacerbate tensions, not just misunderstandings, with the local community.

Conversely, another informant argues that MIL speakers ‘have no right to complain because the policeman is not doing anything wrong; what’s more, those people who speak Totonac do understand Spanish, it’s just that they don’t know how to pronounce the words properly because of the fact that they don’t speak it.’<sup>CPF9</sup> On the one hand, this observation denies that current policy is problematic; on the other



hand, it asserts that some MIL-speakers do not routinely use Spanish and cannot speak it fluently. Thus, it simultaneously confirms that communication problems, (which disadvantage the MIL-speaker) do exist.

Other comments reiterate the role of interpreters: ‘No, [no rights] if a person doesn’t know how to speak Spanish and the policeman doesn’t understand Totonac, in that situation they should look for someone who speaks both languages well and solve things that way.’<sup>CPF 46</sup> The focus in the comment is less on rights, and more on responses; however, in effect, the policeman’s language knowledge is also hypothesised. As such, the barriers preventing officers from activating their MIL language skills in the course of duties, and the costs and benefits of reimagining language policy in this arena, should be re-visited in discussion in Chapter 5.

Again, despite differing perspectives, these comments converge in giving credence to arguments for bilingual practices in this domain of public life. As discussed in relation to education and healthcare, transferring a notion of multilingual practices to public life is not an abstract intellectual exercise, but rather a consideration of feasible, meaningful practices. On this, the sentiment of one comment is relevant: ‘my view is that, so long as it is not anything which causes offence, then the best thing is that the policeman should learn to speak in Totonac, and at the same time, the other person should learn how to speak in Spanish,’<sup>CPF24</sup> As discussed earlier in the chapter, when translanguaging forms part of daily patterns of interaction within the community perhaps it is unremarkable to envision a more linguistically pluralistic character to public services, instead of rigid monolingualism. When another comments that ‘the right thing to do is for everyone to speak in both languages’,<sup>UIEP39</sup> bilingualism is in effect connoted with fairness or parity and equality, values which are pertinent to the exercise and distribution of social power. This relationship of social power to language is reiterated in the remainder of alternative opinions and additional comments. Whether primarily addressing language use: ‘the policeman ought to learn to speak the language which the community speaks;’<sup>CPF 2</sup> or more explicitly addressing attitudes and behaviours: ‘we all have the right to speak in Spanish and Totonac and to respect for the language we speak and the way we dress;’<sup>CPF3</sup> the message of these concluding comments is the same: ‘we all have the right to be respected.’<sup>CPF15</sup> and ‘everyone is entitled to be treated equally.’<sup>CPF3</sup>

#### **4.4.3 Conclusion: Policing and language and management**

This discussion of policing began with questions apparently of communication, but has ended with issues of equality and justice for the embodied MIL-speaker. An initial perception of emergent change in language policy, regarded as positive ideological shift, has been juxtaposed with perceived abuses of power, facilitated by current practices. Although at opposite ends of a spectrum, both viewpoints have functioned in similar ways insofar as they have both reinforced the conceptual links between an acknowledgment of linguistic diversity and the existence of a communication deficit on the one hand, and on the other, recognising the relationship between (dis)respect for linguistic rights and (dis)respect for civil rights.

Although many pragmatic or intermediate responses to the communication/rights gap have been described, a rationalisation has emerged that breaches in civil rights and instances of inequitable treatment correlate with, and are conflated by, language policies. Indeed, even when MIL speakers join the police ranks, this serves to further highlight the inequity of practices of monolingualism, in which they become implicated. Therefore, just as in healthcare, well-being and the avoidance of harm emerged as the key concerns of MIL-speakers in respect of public services, so too questions of language and policing have only served to highlight MIL-speakers' concerns over well-being, in terms of equality of protection, and access to justice.

Despite a largely measured tone and absence of antagonism, informants nevertheless reiterate perceptions of injustice and at times abuse, with clear and firm opinions emerging. First, support for the current monolingual practices in policing is negligible, since these disadvantage speakers who are less proficient in Spanish; second, in their own theorisation, they theorise a correlation between respect for linguistic rights and respect for civil rights; finally, the linguistic capacity for multilingual policing is already in place in the environment, meaning that what is lacking or what can be garnered is the political will for change.

Such change implies an ideological and political shift away from disregard of linguistic diversity, communication breakdown and civil rights deficit, towards a point in which multilingualism is normalised practice in the justice system, (via a range of intermediate positions) and enacted through whichever mechanisms best safeguard the civil and linguistic rights of citizens.

#### **4.5 Ideologies and policies of MIL: conclusions**

In conclusion, this chapter of findings illustrates, on the one hand, the multiplicity and complexity of concepts implicated in processes of language minoritisation: in particular, the intersectionality of linguistic rights, identities, and language valorisation. On the other hand, it expresses degrees of inevitability and predictability in the policy outcomes that are engendered by prevailing ideologies.

For example, the ideological environment underpinning language education is perceived by many to be changing, and yet political will appears to be lacking, evidenced in the lack of policy implementation. There is no desire on the part of the young people to compel others into MIL acquisition, but rather an anxiety to defend their linguistic heritage and to disrupt the minoritisation of MIL and MIL speakers. Despite some anxieties around their Spanish skills development, bilinguality is generally perceived by them as an unproblematic, additive competency; translanguaging practices are the unmarked feature of everyday interaction.

Young people easily negotiate multilingual practices and identities; hence they believe multilingual education is both academically and socially desirable, and that education to support mother languages is a civic and human right, alongside fully proficient acquisition of the national language of Spanish. This unique perspective on bilinguality could contribute towards a reformulation of concepts of national culture transmitted in education policy. In other words, it is not inevitable that intercultural education foster cultural and linguistic integration and homogenisation; instead it could underpin multi-layered Mexican identities. In fact, their point of departure need only be the conceptual and linguistic space young people already occupy.

In the first section of the chapter, language valorisation was discussed in relation to social power, expressed as acts of hearing others, and speaking with others; in subsequent analysis of findings in education, healthcare, and policing it is argued that perceived ideologies of language valorisation still function to muffle the enduring sound of MIL. Even clear sight of the personhood of MIL speakers can be obstructed. Such distortion or oversight is found in terms of ensuring full and equal access to the civic protection by the policing system, linguistic education, and healthcare, all of which hold ramifications for wellbeing and welfare.

Meanwhile, young bilinguals emerge in the data as pragmatic, resourceful and lacking in antagonism towards authorities, services and the nation. Nevertheless, serious grievances are raised, and a clear message is communicated that: ‘there are still those who discriminate against people who speak an indigenous language.’<sup>IRT</sup> At times, MIL speakers seem to be simply overlooked; at other times they seem to be wilfully erased from view. On an everyday level, the effect can be to diminish or eliminate the visibility of MIL-speaking citizens, so that their share of, and rights to, tangible public resources, is minimised relative to others. In simple terms, language discrimination converts a local linguistic majority into a cultural and linguistic minority and displaces MIL speakers to the margins of public services and power.

This marginalisation on the ground from everyday infrastructure and services is arguably echoed in a conceptual distancing of MIL cultures (discussed in Chapter 2) from certain arenas of high-status culture (e.g. of text production or technologies) and a corralling towards others (e.g. folklore, spirituality, tradition). However, of more concern is the conclusion suggested by the data in this chapter that the civic and human rights of MIL speakers, and their social, educational and physical well-being, are implicated in the valorisation of MIL, which is articulated in language policy.

The insight that bilingual, bicultural informants provide illustrates how aspects of language policy in key services reproduce ideological concepts and linguistic practices which bilinguals perceive as discriminatory and minoritising. These diminish or even negate the personhood and well-being of embodied MIL-speakers. These ideologies and policies are important to bear in mind when considering MIL speakers’ own attitudes and behaviours, since this paradigm contextualises the language beliefs and behaviours of all MIL speakers, including young bilinguals.

Such contextualisation is important in order to avoid constructing inaccurate or inadequately nuanced sociolinguistic narratives of MIL speakers amidst enthusiasm for RLS. At the same time as young MIL speakers are handling the responsibility for negotiating the linguistic and rights gap between the apparatus of the nation-state, its services and their communities, so there is a risk that the burden of responsibility for MIL maintenance is loaded onto those who are currently most jeopardised by their use.

Nevertheless, young MIL bilinguals do turn the spotlight on their own communities as often as they do on the dominant Spanish-speaking culture. Most believe fellow MIL speakers valorise their languages, but frequent criticism is made of attitudes and behaviours perceived as unhelpful or lacking in awareness, particularly in the chapter on education, when ‘not even people who speak Totonac’ <sup>CPF30</sup> are regarded as doing enough ‘to demonstrate how much they value it’. Informants recall that only by ‘speaking the language with friends or with parents’ <sup>CPF4</sup> can it be ‘saved from dying’.

To summarise, in these findings young MIL bilinguals have offered invaluable insight and perspective for the discussion ahead (Chapter 5) which explores further the function of sociolinguistic processes in the minoritisation of MIL speakers. Moreover, these data have conveyed a sense of change and generational resistance to negative, discriminatory ideologies, and a sense of enthusiasm among the young for ideological shift and vital, thriving, valorised MIL communities: ‘it’s unique, being part of a family as beautiful as this, part of a culture with so many variations, in a community as beautiful as this, surrounded by nature and a whole diversity of wildlife, it’s just perfect’. <sup>UIEP16</sup>

---

## Chapter 5 Discussion and conclusions

### 5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter has analysed findings on young MIL speakers' perceptions of language ideologies and policies pertaining to their specific cultural and linguistic context of Huehuetla/Kgoyom. The treatment of findings in relation to social identities, and in key areas of public policy (education, healthcare, and policing) has highlighted the state, the research community and MIL-speakers themselves in terms of the roles each performs and the opportunities and challenges they pose or face.

In this chapter, these dimensions are discussed further in terms of wider theoretical and practical implications for endangered language maintenance and management, and for understanding the function of language beliefs and behaviours in the minoritisation of indigenous linguistic cultures. On the one hand, specific aspects of language policy are discussed, namely, the development of language skills and resources and the construction of linguistic identities; on the other hand, particular implications for decolonising praxis in MIL research and policy are explored – issues that all speak to the research questions and objectives of this study.

Therefore, the reference points in this chapter (see figure 5.1 below) mean that yet another perspective is gained on the data, even as discussion continues to explore the key themes interrogated in their earlier analysis. These themes include how language policies, ideologies and discourses function in communicating the valorisation and minoritisation of MIL, and how, at the intersection of these social and linguistic pressures, the *buen vivir* of embodied MIL-speakers is implicated. In this way, issues of public language policy and resources connect with a unifying theme of the study.

The first discussion concerns the development of MIL language skills in public services. It posits that MIL speakers' social needs must be problematised in tandem with their linguistic needs, in order to develop contextually-appropriate language policy. As an example in education, it argues that the CPF offers an ideological and practical approach that attunes the development of both language and wider skills to actual socio-economic needs and aspirations. Moreover, the insider familiarity with linguistic and cultural practices, and commitment to social as well as linguistic goals, mean that this non-state actor is well-placed to formulate and deliver language

policy-in-context. Nevertheless, there are lessons that are transferable to state actors (such as UIEP) and to policy in other services, such as healthcare and policing.

The second discussion centres on language resources, and connects with the first in this emphasis on socio-economic context. For example, the findings indicate that both enthusiasm and caution are expressed towards an expansion of MIL-education: contextual analysis is therefore important to comprehend needs and concerns, and to inform language resource management. Such discussion is informed by policies of MIL-texts in education, aspects of which are again transferable to healthcare and policing.

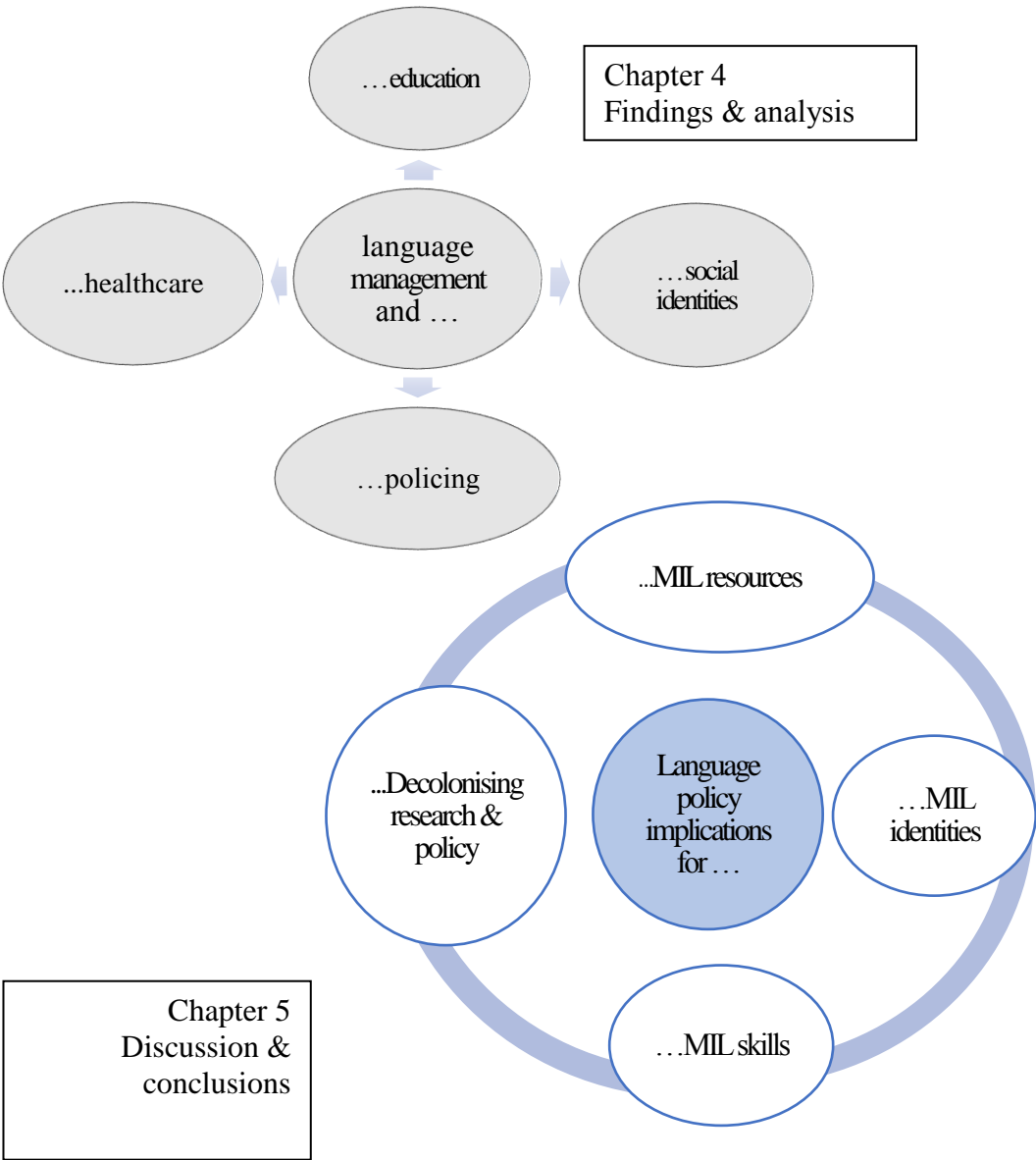
The third discussion concerns language policy and social identities, and is by virtue informed by socio-economic context. The function of language practices and discourses of MIL are considered in terms of (re)configuring social relations, language attitudes, and the valorisation of MIL. Findings have suggested these operate to position MIL speakers in minoritising relationships to the apparatus of national culture, even where MIL-speakers numerically predominate, as in Huehuetla/Kgoyom. Nevertheless, the data also show that young biculturals counter prevailing ideologies by negotiating transcultural identities, and by maintaining a positive social outlook which sustains indigenous linguistic culture in high regard.

Finally, if it is fundamental that policies of language management and MIL maintenance should be contextually-cognisant and responsive, then so too is a disposition to acknowledge how norms and processes of research and policy formulation can also contribute to the minoritisation of MIL cultures; specifically, the function of the colonial gaze in consolidating current sociolinguistic order, the enduring inequities of its constructs (identified by informants as concepts of social identities), and the distribution of social power. In this respect, implications for research and policy interconnect with another objective of the study, namely decolonising praxis. Research agents are no more neutral or objective than is the state in constructing discourses of MIL identities, and just as determinant. Decolonising praxis means making positionalities and purposes explicit which can otherwise be obscured, making costs and benefits to each party transparent, and opening research interventions to the same critical analysis as policy formulation. In this study, the approach has been not to deny the enduringly colonial gaze of the

academy, but rather to engage with it directly by problematising key constituents of the process, such as reciprocity in relationships between the researcher and the researched, and equity of benefits to each party.

In summary, the chapter which follows deconstructs questionnaire findings further, by situating them within overarching conceptual brackets of language policy and MIL skills (5.1), language policy and MIL resources (5.2), and language policy and MIL identities (5.3). From these foci, implications and conclusions can be drawn regarding the application of this study’s findings to wider debates concerning endangered language management.

**Figure 5.1 compares the structure of analysis of findings in Chapter 4 with the structure of discussion of implications in Chapter 5**





## **5.1 Language policy and MIL skills: bilinguality and the interface with the state**

Findings in the previous chapter have shown that when bilinguals' language skill is specifically interrogated, informants are almost evenly split between those who feel equally proficient in either MIL or Spanish, and those who feel more assured of their language skills in MIL. Of interest is that younger Totonac-speakers, raised in the MIL stronghold of Huehuetla/Kgoyom, are more likely to understate their expressive capacity in Spanish, especially writing skills. It is less surprising, therefore, to find that more of these also voice concern that any expansion of MIL in education must not jeopardise their development of fully expressive literacy and skills in Spanish.

Meanwhile, if monolingual Spanish-medium education is failing to equip MIL-speakers with unqualified confidence in their Spanish language skills, then this issue must also be problematised, alongside MIL skills. It might be that young biculturals have a heightened awareness and more critical perception of their language skills, since such consciousness is an additive benefit of bilinguality (Garcia, 2009; Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Qualities of language, culture and identity are more mutable objects in their lives, in contrast with the less reflective linguistic and cultural subjectivity of Spanish-monolinguals, whose identity and language-use is not subject to the same scrutiny by the self or others.

Nonetheless, the implications of a perceived lack of confidence are important and represent a learning need. Indeed, a lack of skill (or confidence) in one language or another does not equate, in a context where linguistic cultures are positioned relative to one another in social hierarchies, and the social meaning of any (perceived) linguistic deficit has to be appreciated. A reminder that this is a social, rather than purely linguistic issue, lies in the testimony of informants (Chapter 4.1) who are concerned that interference from their L1 (e.g. Totonac), could betray them as native MIL speakers, presumably exposing them to disadvantage or discrimination. As seen in relation to healthcare, MIL biculturals indicate there can be negative implications of a Spanish language deficit when dealing with public services.

The examples of how MIL speakers can be marginalised during encounters with public services reveal how language minoritisation occurs in practice. These incidences, occurring at the interface of the state and MIL communities, highlight the civil or human rights' aspects of public language policy. They also recall the burden

on young MIL biculturals to consciously transport and consider their linguistic identities in a manner that Spanish monoculturals are not required to do; in other words, such policies foster a hyper-sensitivity to identity, language-use and representations of the self. Therefore, in terms of language skills and education, developing full cross-linguistic confidence can be said to be a socio-political necessity, adding an ideological dimension to linguistic and pedagogical objectives.

The proposal here is not to seek to measure the extent of informants' skill in both Spanish and MIL; rather, it is to regard lack of confidence as an important finding and learning need which needs to be addressed at face value, by addressing the scope and character of language education policy, not only the code employed. For example, students from homes or communities where Spanish is non-dominant may find that at school they lack opportunities to engage in sufficiently meaningful, authentic, demanding and purposeful linguistic production which stretches abilities and fosters full confidence. It is unsurprising if students do not feel fully linguistically confident if they only experience a limited range of genres, text-types, semantic fields and cultural content at school. Therefore, appropriate policy response means detecting deficits and limitations in the language curriculum, such as inauthentic resources and the reductive character of (Spanish monolingual) classroom discourses, and stretching students to deploy language for a full range of academic, social or creative purposes.

If not, then even if MIL are subsequently included in the curriculum as a medium or object of study, there may still be insufficient opportunities to fully engage receptive and productive skills in either Spanish or MIL. In this respect, policy which generates such discursive opportunities and challenges is as beneficial to Spanish-language monoculturals as it is to MIL biculturals; however for the latter, it carries additional social meaning by addressing a specific learning need. Conversely, the same approach applied to MIL could allow conceptual barriers that delimit the 'appropriate' domains and purposes of MIL-use to be challenged.

Language activities in Spanish and MIL and classroom or campus discourses should be functioning not only to extend skills, but also to problematise language valorisation and sociolinguistic order, and to actively pursue language parity. This objective can be fostered, for example by situating MIL alongside Spanish for

prestige functions in the school curriculum (such as uses with technology), and by purposefully facilitating the type of social and affective inter-generational interactions which the literature suggests will foster vitality (see Chapter 1). Moreover, language education should include explicitly educating students and parents on the principles of language maintenance, such as parent-child transmission.

Bilingual education has been described as often lacking specificity as a conceptual item (García, 2009), and that its underlying principles and premises need to be interrogated and contested. If bilingual education policy is to be discussed here in terms of sustaining MIL and developing cross-linguistic skills, then it is also necessary to identify its view of bilinguality and the ideologies it references, as these, it has been argued (García, 2009), will ultimately determine outcomes. When monoglossic ideologies underpin bilingual education (as discussed in Chapter 1), bilinguality is still viewed as subtractive of skills and knowledge; therefore, monoglossic-informed bilingual education still tends to modify bilingual children's language practices, and/or effectively foster language shift (see Hornberger 1999).

The experience of many informants to this study who attended primary schools which were referred to as bilingual, exemplifies such policy. In practice, the evidential function of the schools was to transit mother tongue speakers of Totonac in their formative years towards the exclusive use of Spanish in all subsequent years of education. As such, these bilingual schools can be characterised as agents of the state that actively minoritise indigenous languages and majoritise Spanish. Despite the numerical and cultural predominance of its speakers, Totonac-use is diminished by them and ultimately removed from sites of learning, whilst Spanish is expanded and embedded as the medium of education and public life.

Indeed, even when linguistic diversity is professed as a goal, monoglossic ideologies arguably remain detectable as underlying premises and outcomes. For example, if MIL tend to be represented in curricula only as cultural objects or endangered patrimony requiring intervention for the sake of preservation, this detracts attention from developing pedagogies that actively employ MIL as the de-facto, unmarked and unremarkable contemporary medium of communication between young people, linguistically adequate for all communicative purposes and politically legitimate for all spheres of public and civic activity, including all aspects of education.

### **5.1.1 Language policy and MIL skills: translanguaging, contextual skills and education**

This focus on language skills development has brought the discussion back to competing conceptualisations of societal bilinguality in education. Bilingual education, it has been argued (García, 2009), will more effectively develop skills if it references linguistic ideologies, characterised as heteroglossic or transglossic in nature, that encourage a pluralistic view of societal multilingualism and locate language education within this conceptual framework. In this way, education policy will be better placed to detect and respond to the actual language learning needs and aspirations of multilingual pupils.

In Freirean (1970) terms, this socially-situated perspective is a fundamental, and can be facilitated by more reflective classroom praxis, which continually orients policy towards collective or social needs, as well as individual objectives; thus it must necessarily employ and support contextual linguistic practices. For a context such as the one in this study, this perspective is significant, since most of the school students are not only producers of text, but also important economically productive members of their households and community. Language education should not be divorced from this reality, but rather should mirror and support it and engage with learners' priorities, which are personal and individual, but also extend to the wider community. Cultural and linguistic maintenance are important in the here and now to young Totonac speakers participating in subsistence agriculture (alongside further and higher education and waged labour), and interconnecting with other Totonac speakers in securing the social and economic welfare of their households.

For this reason, this chapter will later revisit education policy at the CPF, which attempts to pursue such context-oriented objectives. Meanwhile, the focus here on contextual needs, combined with a societal perspective on bilinguality, makes even more explicit the role of language-in-education policy for shaping wider language attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. As such, an opportunity is presented to acknowledge and problematise this role in favour of MIL, rather than negate it. Even if (or especially if) the wider ideological context communicates fairly inflexible notions of MIL and Spanish, education policy nonetheless offers a space which can be (and should be) transformative of status quo, rather than only ever a consolidating

agent. For example, a simple act is to admit, permit and foster (rather than ignore or inhibit) the translanguaging behaviours and transglossic skill of young MIL speakers in classroom and campus discourses.

Even with the recent emergence of new discourses of linguistic diversity and MIL maintenance, language ideologies have the potential to inadvertently portray the everyday language behaviours of young MIL biculturals as transgressive. Language beliefs can reference unrealistic or constructed notions of language order, purity, and normality, values that are also often informed by false or ossified notions of indigenous languages, for example, regarding their form, or territoriality. These notions do not fit neatly with (what has been termed) the disorder, impurity, and abnormality of everyday language practices of biculturals (Blommaert, Leppänen, & Spotti, 2012:6). Similarly, unrealistic ideals of linguistic and cultural authenticity only serve to create a need for ‘policing’ language use (ibid); as far as MIL and MIL speakers are concerned, such ideas create a dangerous potential to reinforce rather than reduce linguistic marginalisation, if policy interventions (e.g. in education) reinforce a differentiation of permissible language uses (genres, code-mixing, topics), and a differential valorisation of language practices.

Any approach overly focused on MIL purity also runs the risk that indigenous languages could become assimilated into the public imaginary as static, iconic cultural items of symbolic value, rather than as dynamic, contemporary linguistic tools for communicative purposes. To use Blommaert’s (2012) terms again, there is a need to avoid ‘artefactualising’ linguistic cultures (2012:6). In the area of endangered language research, for example, this is arguably a risk of the disproportionate focus on documenting and describing endangered languages, and on establishing and demarcating language and dialect boundaries, producing grammars, and recording cultural traditions. In other words, more attention is currently focused on identifying and cataloguing distinctive, constituent elements of a linguistic culture, than it is to discovering the actual nature of speakers’ interactive linguistic practices, (observations which seem pertinent here, given the state of research on Totonac discussed in Chapter 2).

While documentation and description are invaluable, it is research into language practices and responsive public policy formulation which are likely to be more directly relevant in terms of outcomes for the embodied MIL speaker, and for language maintenance and societal bilinguality in the longer term. In a community such as appears in this study, the emphasis must be on how to sustain and extend speakers' (current, bilingual, contextual) skills, over the preservation of a disembodied linguistic object, so as to meet speakers' educational and linguistic needs and aspirations.

From the perspective of actual language practices, young MIL bicultural informants illustrate the applicability and congruence of both MIL and Spanish to the communicative purposes of everyday life. As findings (peer research, focus groups and questionnaire data) suggest, informants do not code-switch neatly between Totonac or Náhuatl and Spanish, according to home or public domain. Instead, they engage in translanguaging within and beyond the home domain. Moreover, in the estimation of speakers, even when they differentiate language-use by domain or other delimiter, the interchange is not perceived as adding to the value of Spanish or subtracting from the value of MIL. Rather, the social value of MIL and temporal validity or coevalness is communicated *de facto* in their deployment for authentic language acts and purposes. It therefore follows that MIL biculturals (especially the younger students) should want their years of schooling to leave them fully equipped, skilled and highly literate in both Spanish and MIL, and view this as a feasible objective, without privileging one and relegating another.

At this point it is useful to recall how the concepts of languaging, translanguaging and home language practices (discussed in Chapters 1 and 2) emphasise actual language deployment, rather than abstract language knowledge. Just as learners can make recourse to a suite of language abilities, varieties and habits during familial and social interactions beyond the classroom, so these practices can provide a template for policy design within it, rather than recurrence to abstract models. Again, a simple principle - to observe localised linguistic norms and consult on local language needs – can be recalled. Thus an entry-point is gained to bilingual education policy that moves away from inaccurate or restrictively purist ideations of language -use.

In Chapter 2, it was argued that home language practices in a rural subsistence community extend outside the walls of the family home, since activity in agriculture, animal husbandry, artisanal food production or other enterprises based on raw material inputs from the local environment, continually cross and shift boundaries of public/private, individual/collective and home /community. In other words, social and linguistic interactions with others, occurring in spaces not directly integrated into the household, nevertheless are integral to its identity as a socio-economic and linguistic unit, and are significant in its reproduction of linguistic and economic culture.

In a similar fashion, ideologies and policies of MIL and bilingual education need to conceptually step outside the confines of traditional classroom discourses /activities and off the page of the usual school textbook. The economic and cultural practices of MIL-speaking households require a blurring or redrafting of conceptual boundaries between domains and interlocutors (relative to urban lifestyles), and so too ideologies of language-use (and corresponding policies of language education) must also meld and shift. For this reason, the thesis has considered that languaging is a helpful notion for this context, since it conveys a sense of processual and fluid language management. Moreover, in a context where urban and rural lifestyles interconnect and national and local cultures are overlaid, biculturals have not only an extra linguistic code at their disposal, but can deploy additional conceptual frameworks and relationships (towards the community, the economy and the environment) which are not available in the same way to monoculturals. MIL biculturals routinely switch between Totonac and Spanish but also between knowledges and life skills, making adjustment to language, behaviours and perhaps even beliefs and attitudes according to social and communicative needs.

If translanguaging encourages a focus on actual, observable linguistic practices, then it can usefully serve policy design in education and other arenas where linguistic cultures interface with the apparatus and services of the state. As a concept it is complex, but no more inherently problematic than are the attempts to define, in abstract terms, what it means to ‘know’ or be able to ‘speak’ ‘a’ ‘language’ (Grinevald, 2011; Dorian, 1977). Indeed, there has long been a call for such conceptual tools, particularly in developing and post-independence societies, that



facilitate better understanding of the nature of ‘multilingual repertoires that emerge from intercultural practices, how they function instrumentally and in the construction of identities, and how best to develop them through education’ (Freeland, 2003:253). Coming full circle, language-in-education policy should depart from and head towards the actual, contemporary, contextual social and linguistic needs of (in this case) bicultural MIL speakers, and ensuring this sphere expands rather than diminishes by spreading out to encompass aspirations and new functions.

Appropriately targeted research with young biculturals can identify aspirations, but also investigate more immediate and specific learning needs, in relation both to MIL and Spanish skills development. Moreover, educational practice can counteract threats to MIL vitality and societal multilingualism not only through linguistic skills development, but also knowledge, skills and resources that support the local culture and economy; for example, the communication of knowledge regarding the value (historic, economic, social and cultural) of the rural productive enterprises engaged in by predominantly MIL-speaking households, which are overlooked in a curriculum focused on national, urban, Spanish-speaking culture and identity.

This ideation of multilingual education policy as transferring knowledge of, and esteem for, the socio-economic as well as linguistic practices of MIL communities, responds to a need to consider and address not only sociolinguistic order, but also the socio-economic conditions in which cultures and languages - or rather speakers - flourish or are diminished (as discussed in Chapter 1 in relation to language vitality). Moreover, if linguistic hierarchies position individuals and groups relative to one another for the (uneven) distribution of costs and benefits, it also follows that the extent of an individual’s multilingualism can be directly related to the position of their home languages in a given social order. For example, speakers of lower-ranked languages must acquire the dominant language of the nation-state, and perhaps even additional languages ranked in between these, to gain access to the same domains and public goods available to a speaker who is monolingual in the dominant language (Freeland, 2003).

Indeed, social domains are ascribed to languages, and access restricted accordingly, as part of processes of sociolinguistic ranking in post-independence contexts (see discussion also in Chapter 1). This ‘oligolingualism’ (Blommaert et al, 2012:6)



informs and is in turn informed by the character of bilingual education policy, which usually functions to sustain such ideological paradigms. In practice, this often means that, for example, primary education may indeed be multilingual, but the most prized resources and infrastructure of the state (e.g. higher education) become a domain of the national, first-ranked language. By extension, the benefits which HE confers then disproportionately accrue to speakers of the most socially valorised language.

Nevertheless, conscious and targeted language policy can transgress and undermine hegemonic social and linguistic concepts – one of the reasons why education is such contested territory. Hence, the new initiative of expanding MIL-education in HE, and of establishing intercultural universities in MIL-dominant communities, merits close monitoring to extract the ideological and tangible implications they hold, aside from linguistic consequences. At the same time, in a situation of language inequality, multilingualism implies additional linguistic burden for speakers of lower-ranked languages (Freeland, 2003). In a globalised context, this burden can extend to acquiring languages beyond the dominant regional or national code to other languages. For example, Totonac-speaking students at CPF must be literate in English, as well as Spanish, to pass the entrance exam for the BUAP, and ironically, to thus access university scholarships for speakers of MIL.<sup>207</sup>

To recall these issues is not to understate the scale and persistence of MIL-use in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, nor the normative character of MIL/Spanish translanguaging practices among young people - indeed, the prevalence of MIL-use among this generation of biculturals makes their sociolinguistic beliefs and behaviours especially interesting and worthy of investigation. Rather, it is to simply state that patterns of translanguaging are coherent with, rather than contradictory to, speakers' strategic adaptation to sociolinguistic context. The analysis of informants' social context, interpretation of findings, and discussion of bilingual education policy have revealed the usefulness of concepts such as home language practices and translanguaging, meaning these linguistic behaviours should be perceived as societal norms, rather than linguistic transgressions. Furthermore, a more expansive concept of the home domain, acknowledging the socio-economic identity of rural subsistence households, allows an appreciation of the language practices (within and between interconnected,

---

<sup>207</sup> As well as gain access to some of the latest research on Totonac languages

inter-dependent households) that combine in consolidating its ‘anchor domain’ (Landweer, 2012) function for linguistic and cultural vitality.

Therefore, in terms of bilingual education policy, relevant to a rural MIL community situated within the linguistic hierarchies of a globalised, post-independence society, the approach should support bilinguality through purposeful skills deployment, (rather than simply knowledge accumulation). In terms of classroom practice, it is not enough that MIL texts simply enter the domain of education, as if they were cultural items which, as Blommaert et al have argued (2012), governing elites of post-independence states claim as common patrimony as they (re)construct the nation-state. Rather both Spanish and MIL must be purposefully employed for socially meaningful, personally relevant, and contextually authentic objectives, across a range of skills, discourse types and genres.

School curricula may, by definition, delimit language use. However, awareness of these concerns encourages a breadth of perspective and flexibility of curriculum, whilst focusing attention on more targeted bilingual skills development, with the purposes of MIL maintenance in mind, governed by the actual, contextual needs of MIL biculturals. The impact of current education received by students of indigenous language communities has been characterised by MIL biculturals working in education as ‘ineffective and ethnocidal’ (Alianza de Profesionales Indígenas Bilingües AC, 1992: 207 in Norbert & Reyhner, 2002) because of the perceived cultural and linguistic gap between service provision and learner needs. In other words, bilingual education means more than merely accommodating linguistic forms into current provision, but making the shift from centralism towards devolution which would allow pluricultural pedagogies to emerge, led by MIL-speaking educators rooted in MIL linguistic cultures.

### **5.1.2 Language policy and MIL skills: alternative cultural models: Colegio Paulo Freire**

With these issues in mind, it is helpful to re-visit the CPF in Huehuetla/Kgoyom (see Chapter 3), which offers an alternative model of education to MIL-speakers and is attended by many of this study's informants. As its name suggests, the CPF is informed by Freirean philosophical approach that situates education within community empowerment, pursues an alignment of education policy to learners' contextual needs (as per discussion in the previous section), which are identified through critical analysis of context on the one hand, and with positive valorisation of local cultural and linguistic practices on the other. The first analytical process interconnects with the second insofar as the school's positionality is not culture-bound, but ideologically-led: policy objectives are not so much the preservation of a linguistic object, or the artefactualising of a linguistic culture, but rather an appreciation of the inherent value of local social and linguistic culture and by implication, its maintenance.

Since inception, CPF has differentiated itself from other provision by its use of Totonac on campus and by always teaching Totonac language, translation, poetry and literature (including its oral tradition of social histories and stories). However, in terms of bilingual education policy, the first point of interest for discussion is that CPF has never specifically designed a policy for the management of language in education. Instead, its policy on bilingual education is expressed de-facto in its everyday school language practices, and by its approach to the profile and use of Totonac in the domain of education.

This approach can be described as permissive of multilingualism and translanguaging, as linguistically and procedurally inclusive towards parents (among whom Totonac monolingualism persists) and as responsive to local linguistic realities; this stands in contrast to the local education sector which has traditionally reproduced minoritising practices, such as the exclusive use of Spanish. Totonac may not always be the medium of instruction at CPF, since this depends on the linguistic profile of volunteer teaching staff, but it is always present as a language of everyday communication, administration, recreation, problem-solving, logistics, governance, decision-making, parental consultation, economic and extra-curricular activities.

These simple practices, which align with local linguistic culture, have strongly distinguished the school from other monolingual provision in the sector.

Indeed, it can be argued that the school's pioneering of community access to computing and the internet, its housing of a substantial library, regular hosting of visiting lecturers, and the academic and professional destination of its graduates, collectively function to correlate the use of Totonac/MIL (and Totonac-speakers) with academic achievement and use of technology. In this way, the de facto language policy of the school transgresses minoritising ideologies and policies, present in the local and wider sociolinguistic order, which dissociate MIL and MIL speakers from such socio-economic benefits.

On the other hand, the school adopts traditional Totonac cultural practices, such as communal duties, participatory and consensual decision-making, and economic autonomy premised on individual responsibility in collective enterprise, especially agricultural. Indeed, the insertion of agricultural production into the school's curriculum, and the prominence given to skills and knowledge closely associated with Totonac culture and the economically productive activity of many learners' households, should also be regarded as pertinent language policy.

Young Totonac biculturals negotiate the social infrastructure of both subsistence and commercial agriculture, as well as the demands of urban, globalised, cash-economies, and minoritised and dominant identities. The curriculum at CPF can be said to mirror this transcultural capacity; for example, it brings the communicative and productive practices of the home, literally and metaphorically, into the domain of education. By association this valorises the enterprise and linguistic practices of the home, and softens linguistic and conceptual boundaries between domains, such as the home, where language policy can be said to evolve, and school, where language policy is clearly constructed. In other words, bilingual education policy at CPF is not only about hours timetabled for language instruction: rather, it communicates a valorisation of MIL, MIL speakers and their lifestyles in identifiable ways, through practices which enhance, rather than diminish, the vitality of MIL households.

Unless MIL feature in this way in education - aligned to the everyday practices and purposes of real speakers - they remain marginalised and may even be reinforced as objects only of study (or dismissal), rather than use. Moreover, the endangered

language literature suggests that language policy is only meaningful when it connects young speakers with a deployment of language in ways that sustain its survival: that is, in interactions which are affectively engaging and inter-generational (Fishman, 1991), and multi-dimensional in terms of topics, domains, semantic fields, communicative purposes, and interlocutors (Spolsky, 2009).

Despite inevitable flaws, the de-facto language policy at CPF and its constructed curriculum combine to socialise young MIL speakers in an educational environment which positively valorises their language community (argued to be minoritised elsewhere by its public sector counterparts) and to add academic value to their skills-set (in contrast to national under-achievement). As discussed in the study, under-performance among pupils identified as indigenous have been at worrying levels - only 4% were achieving target grades in mathematics at the new millennium (RAND, 2005). During fieldwork (2012-2014) the CPF was achieving over 80% retention and over 90% graduations with high school baccalaureate, with up to half its alumni continuing into further or higher education. The intention here is not to make a simplistic comparison between CPF pupils and those in the state system, since a multiplicity of variables are implicated. Nevertheless, what can be concluded as self-evident from these figures is that academic achievement by MIL-speakers is context-responsive, rather than culture-bound.

Successful achievement ruptures myths that detract qualities of reasoning from indigenous linguistic cultures; it supports argument that MIL development must embrace not only language education, but academic excellence. If young people from cash-limited households can achieve at CPF, then so can all. This tends to suggest that public provision is currently functioning to minoritise rather than to empower MIL speakers. Indeed some consider that the primary purpose of an expansion of rural education in Mexico has been to socialise MIL speakers into the dominant culture and language (e.g. Hidalgo, 1994); going further, others argue (Skutnabb & Dunbar, 2010) that prevailing patterns of education provision for minoritised language communities is tantamount to an abuse of human rights and a form of linguisticide by an agent of the state. Given the depressing statistics on achievement in state education, perhaps MIL communities have been experiencing what indigenous language speakers elsewhere in the Americas have characterised as 'poor education for poor people' (Oliart, 2011).

### 5.1.3 Language policy and MIL skills: bilinguality and public services

‘and when you talk to them in Totonac they act as if they don’t understand, and that makes it difficult for the person to explain their case.’<sup>IRT5</sup>

The quote above is a young MIL bicultural’s perception of what occurs when a Totonac monolingual from their community turns to the police for help. Despite the fact that there are inevitably policemen who do speak or understand Totonac, the skill of bilinguality seems to be abandoned in public services once a uniform is donned or an office is assumed, an impression echoed in an anecdote from a local nurse. These perceptions speak to the power of public institutions and institutional language policy in determining, on the one hand, the language attitudes and practices of public servants, with consequences for the health or security or education of MIL monolingual citizens; and on the other hand, their impact on young MIL biculturals, who bear witness to such language ideologies and policies in the environment, with potential repercussions for their own language behaviours and beliefs.

In Huehuetla/Kgoyom, Totonac is spoken by almost 90% of the local population, and at least one third cannot communicate in Spanish (see Chapter 2.3). This means that MIL biculturals observe how, despite the actual linguistic diversity of their context, the interface with the state (in public services) is firmly characterised by Spanish monolingualism. This is confirmed in responses to open questions about police and healthcare services, which reveal how full or equitable access to these services is almost impossible without Spanish. While the majority express a sense of injustice or even anger at such language policy, there is also a suggestion among the comments that other MIL biculturals in effect sustain such monolingualism by not engaging in MIL-use with MIL monolinguals.

The actions of individuals aside, this wilful disregard of a community’s linguistic profile by institutions of the state means that the language policy of public services can be characterised as an institutionalised form of linguistic or ethnolinguistic discrimination, or linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988). Such discrimination borrows from ideologies which reference constructs of national identity and language, and in effect embed sociolinguistic stratification into the national consciousness. The efficacy of this conceptual correlation between national identity, the performance of public service, and sociolinguistic stratification, is attested by the fact that Spanish

monolingualism in public services is normalised and unmarked. On the one hand, this study finds MIL biculturals sustaining the Spanish language policy as service providers; on the other hand, it finds MIL biculturals routinely resolving the needs of MIL-speaking service users, by intermediation and interpretation.

By restricting the spaces available for the use of the country's indigenous languages, and by engaging MIL speakers in the delivery of such language policy, the state communicates a powerful message regarding the valorisation of MIL, and by extension, MIL speakers. In other words, a policy of sociolinguistic exclusion from life-enhancing or life-sustaining services, such as medical care, compounds the vulnerability of already structurally vulnerable groups. This functions to embed oligolingualism (Blommaert et al, 2012) or the hegemonic social and linguistic ideologies of successive governing elites which concentrate, rather than redistribute public goods by language use.

Without entering debate on the cost implications to national government of multilingual public services such as healthcare and policing, in effect the disbursement of national resources has already been anticipated by political and sociolinguistic continuity. Yet, this apparent continuity is contradicted to an extent by change in language policy elsewhere in government, such as the allocation of funds to INALI, or the Intercultural Universities. This raises questions about the prioritisation of language policy and public services relative one another, and relative to other language policy initiatives of the state, such as documentation and description. This thesis has not set out to investigate the detail of government language policy in these terms, but rather has discussed how MIL biculturals living in a MIL stronghold currently perceive and process language ideologies and policies in the environment. However, it has raised questions regarding future research into the relative allocation of public service resources between MIL-predominant and Spanish-predominant environments, as an expression of language policy by successive governments.

As argued in this thesis, notions of sociolinguistic continuity and change are not distant or abstract concepts in the lives of MIL biculturals, but rather the terrain they traverse on personal journeys through the national context, transporting personal ambitions and familial obligations. Informants witness their fellow MIL speakers'

failure to find a response to their needs from public servants and institutions, and sometimes a failure to seek provision, suggestive of a level of self-censorship from provision, noted in respect of legal recompense. As findings indicate, encounters with authorities or service providers are often characterised by an absence of communication, action, or reaction on the part of public institutions with insufficient political will for interaction in MIL with MIL-speaking client groups. Strongly negative evaluative terms are used when informants discuss perceptions of community policing, security and justice. Indeed, in this arena, informants often discuss the necessity or the option to side-step public entities and instead pursue individual or linguistic community-organised alternatives for justice or conflict resolution.

For example, as discussed in Chapter 4, whatever the actual incidence of police assault, findings and fieldwork attest to heightened levels of fear among MIL speakers; for example, in a series of incidents witnessed during the period, informants chose not to seek police assistance. An anxiety at engagement with the justice system and law enforcement will undoubtedly be shared across language groups; however, if such vulnerability is compounded by linguistic as well as structural disadvantage, then a community minoritised by language policy is further marginalised and susceptible.

At the same time, Totonac-speakers in a stronghold such as Huehuetla/Kgoyom may be able to gain access to alternative cultural options for conflict-resolution that are not available to migrants in cities or indeed to local Spanish monoculturals. In this specific instance, incidents were instead reported to the local indigenous tribunal and a series of open meetings held at CPF to seek a consensual approach. Crucially, a defining characteristic of such approach is non-violence – at no time was force proposed or sanctioned.

It is significant that where cultural control is exercised, non-violence emerges as an underlying principle. In this MIL community, its own policing strategies or methods of making public a dispute and responding collectively to it, stand juxtaposed with a perception of violence from state institutions charged with policing. Again, the argument is that when considering policy for appropriate bilingual policing in MIL communities, it is not simply a question of inserting linguistic code, but one of



acknowledging fundamental cultural and ethical disparities and being open to alternative or interconnecting models. Policing strategies for multicultural contexts may appear a complex, but as the world's most powerful cities become increasingly multilingual and multicultural, so it appears to be a less idealistic and more pragmatic issue. Just as with education, a community-centred or consultative approach can guide policy on contextual policing, if there is political will. At the moment, MIL communities adapt or submit to the language use and practices of public services and institutions; MIL revitalisation policy requires that institutions of the state adapt to local context, and seek models that, if not entirely appropriate to language and culture, at least do not disrupt or undermine MIL cultural and linguistic practices, or harm MIL-speakers.

To a limited extent, it can be argued that such an approach is starting to be modestly trialled in Huehuetla/Kgoyom, as local authorities begin reinstating cultural models of public services that were established during the period of OIT local government (discussed in Chapter 3) but were dismantled afterwards in the period of political retrenchment by the municipal authorities. In healthcare for example, a publically-funded traditional Totonac medicine clinic has recently been opened next to the hospital; in policing, the indigenous tribunal has once again been offered federal support and accommodation, both of which were withdrawn when OIT lost its second period of office. All service provision is complex to design and expensive to run; however, provision which respects, rather than disrupts, local linguistic and cultural practices is not necessarily any more problematic. Rather, the greatest hurdle may be ideological - to accept that the maintenance of MIL diversity must go beyond simply reproducing uniform cultural practices in a range of languages.

Compared to the subject of policing where perceptions are almost uniformly negative, encounters between healthcare professionals and MIL monolinguals generate a much greater range of opinion. A common thread is the intervention and problem-solving behaviour of MIL biculturals in the face of an ideological distribution of power expressed as, first: language acts which connote risk of harm or neglect onto embodied MIL speakers; and second, as language acts which function in the sociolinguistic minoritisation of MIL linguistic cultures.

These direct acts of language management function via apportionment of blame, and application of sanction. Service users who fail to employ the designated language of the domain are sanctioned, and access to life-sustaining resources must be negotiated. The net effect is to create a monolingual service in a linguistically diverse environment, where providers can become more focussed on the linguistic in compliance of service users, than their own in compliance with delivering service to the host community. In this way, language ideologies, policies and management are all implicated in the violence of verbal assaults, and the risk to well-being from less accessible medical attention. The most common theme which emerges from informants' data in respect of healthcare and all public service provision is one of invisibility: being overlooked, unattended, unheard, diminished in stature and presence, and minoritised.

With specific regard to healthcare, the term discrimination (often qualified as severe and frequent) is used most often by older informants at the UIEP, which is interesting since, on the one hand, the state actively engages young MIL biculturals at the UIEP with the formal legalistic or academic discourses of linguistic and cultural rights, ideologies and policies. On the other hand, MIL biculturals make recourse to these discourses in critiquing current context and state provision. Furthermore, the Intercultural Universities are both product of public policy change, and generative of change, through expanding educational and vocational opportunities for MIL-speakers, with potential consequences for language policy and public services (see discussion on the UIEP in Chapter 2).

For example, MIL-speaking nurses are now graduating from the UIEP, accredited for working in public provision. Whilst it is not new that MIL-speakers from Huehuetla/Kgoyom train as nurses, in the past this has been achieved by leaving Huehuetla/Kgoyom and residing in Puebla or in large towns in the lowlands, such as Teziutlán. In such towns, different MIL linguistic cultures are mixed and displaced using Spanish and mestizo cultural references, so that MIL-speakers, despite their numerical presence, lose visibility.

Therefore, the act of training cohorts of MIL-speaking nurses together in a Totonac-dominant community and pro-MIL institutions of the state has the potential to foment Xish consciousness among future service providers on the one hand and

expand MIL-speaking capacity on the other. There is scope, therefore, for impact on language policy and service delivery from the bottom-up, following a top-down initiative. However, depending on the nature of language policy in the nursing degree programme, the initiative may contradictorily function to further embed the use of Spanish language in healthcare provision, by further increasing the capacity of MIL biculturals, who are trained and educated in Spanish, to deliver healthcare provision in Spanish.

These themes of participation, exclusion, and public services, and of continuity and change in language policies and ideologies, contextualise informants' discussions of what they term pragmatic solutions to urgent problems. MIL biculturals shoulder a responsibility – probably willingly and skilfully – of bridging a gap between the needs of their own communities and public language policy and provision. The ideological status quo generates language policy which has tangible consequences for the embodied MIL speaker. This is seen in terms of individual well-being, educational achievement, physical security, and access to justice, as well as in the socio-political and linguistic valorisation of collective identities and cultures.

In other words, the gap to be bridged between the state and its citizens is more than linguistic; nevertheless, so too is the capacity of young MIL biculturals, who are experiential experts, able to theorise their context. It remains to be seen whether newly graduated cohorts of MIL-speaking nurses, for example, from public institutions endowed with the responsibility of raising MIL-consciousness and MIL-use, will be quickly absorbed and disappear into the skin of current service provision and language policy, or will radically reconfigure the embodied state and the language it speaks.

Until now, the ad-hoc arrangements for interpretation which informants describe in the findings are suggestive of an inherent contradiction in language policy and public service provision: on the one hand, MIL-speakers have an expectation of encountering other MIL speakers when attending facilities such as health clinics, and even depend on this fact, which implies a widespread and enduring use of MIL among local people; on the other hand, such facilities appear unprepared and unequipped for such a predictable, routine occurrence – namely, that local service users who ordinarily communicate in MIL, will require attention in MIL.

This contradiction communicates two important messages. First, inequality: citizens who only speak or better speak a language autochthonous to the area in which they traditionally and legally reside, do not gain the same unmediated access to public services available to others who speak Spanish; secondly, invisibility: discussion of such inequality remains largely unvoiced, compared to the discourses of MIL maintenance and revitalisation, and in consideration of the gravity of implications arising from a lack of healthcare or personal security. Moreover, this study's data indicate that MIL-service users and MIL biculturals problematise and address these inequalities through their own (unacknowledged) social and linguistic interventions and logistical efforts.

Therefore, the disposition, skill and capacity of MIL communities to respond to their own needs, and for MIL biculturals to bridge the linguistic gap in public services, is masking a wilful failure on the part of authorities to perceive, let alone address, the language profile of their citizens and client groups. This failure in policies combines with discriminatory ideologies to impact negatively on MIL-speakers access to healthcare and policing, with repercussions for well-being. A need exists for dedicated research to establish the range and extent of the implications of policy failure, for example, client confidentiality, or under-reporting of assault or injury, and to design appropriate responses.

Even within the confines of this study which is non-specialist, MIL-speakers have shared incidences of untreated chronic disease, acute injury, and cases of infant mortality which they perceive were exacerbated by inequitable and inadequate access to healthcare, and histories of unresolved grievances and injustices (including the unprosecuted murder of the founder of the CPF, Griselda Tirado). The net effect of such policy failures has been to inflict harm or neglect upon MIL speakers, which are rationalised and articulated in these terms by MIL speakers.

In any structurally vulnerable group (e.g. subsistence farmers in a cash-limited, rural context), a multiplicity of factors interact to jeopardise health and security and impede access to public services (e.g. access to transport, dispersal of population, and availability of cash). It may or may not be the case that MIL monolinguals are more likely than Spanish monolinguals to have access restricted to health or other public services because other dependent resources are lacking. Nevertheless, it is

precisely for this reason that any exacerbating factors, such as language policies, should be addressed. Indeed, it may even be the case that linguistic factors can be addressed more rapidly and economically than other issues.

At the intersection of language policy in education and public services sits the well-being of embodied MIL-speakers, and the vitality and valorisation of MIL languages. Findings reveal both continuity and change: biculturals report frequent instances in which the use of MIL is suppressed and MIL speakers are in effect silenced by persons distributing the resources of the nation-state, and exercising its authority. This side-lining and literal oversight of MIL speakers in public health facilities, for example, reproduces and communicates harmful ideologies of inequality; the lack of reception of MIL speakers' complaints by police authorities communicates invisibility, and is compounded by a fear of mistreatment or abuse, which distributes power and positions speakers in a marginal relationship to the nation-state. Finally, the relatively swift and unyielding transition to Spanish monolingualism in the public education system firmly establishes its dominance in the sociolinguistic order.

Nevertheless, MIL biculturals are not passive objects of such policies and ideologies, but rather, interactors who respond strategically to current and changing contexts, employing the increments of perspective, and disposition, linguistic and cognitive skill of their social and linguistic identities, and exploiting new educational and economic opportunities as they arise.

In the next section, the focus shifts towards language resources, especially the insertion of MIL texts into education, and the Intercultural Universities into HE. Further reflection unpacks the function of language policy in either consolidating or counteracting the social and linguistic minoritisation of MIL cultures and speakers.

## 5.2 Language policy and MIL resources: cultural control

In this section, a focus on MIL resources considers the implications of policy interventions on MIL-use and users, and interconnects with the previous discussion of MIL skills. Of particular interest are policies which, on the one hand, multiply MIL resources, and on the other hand, claim MIL as national patrimony, thus inserting the state as a controlling agent. Bonfil Batalla's (1983) notion of cultural control is referenced so as to consider the actions of agents producing and managing MIL resources, and to assess the tangible and intangible returns to each. Consequently, issues of state patronage and national patrimony, and MIL-speakers' access to the means and benefits of text production emerge as key themes. In addition, discussion must necessarily consider the implications of new media and their use by non-state actors, for example, in academic/activist collaborations, with young MIL speakers' increasing access to new technologies in their communities at the intercultural universities.

The expansion of MIL resources is inevitably linked to state patronage. In education, the state has committed itself to fostering MIL literacy (see Chapter 2), and as such has the potential to normalise the production and reception of texts in MIL. In other multilingual post-independence societies, the language of greatest national reach for printed text is still the colonial, rather than indigenous languages, and publishing houses have neglected indigenous languages (Motsaathebe, 2011). Indigenous languages continue to be underutilised (as media of instruction or communication), and this under-utilisation further justifies inertia with literacy programmes and publishing. Among this study's informants, there is virtual consensus for expanding MIL-education. This section therefore opens with three examples of initiatives concerning MIL resources, and applies questions of cultural control from differing perspectives to reflect on language policy. First, the SEP's (Ministry of Education) act of inclusion of contemporary poetry in Totonac (with Spanish translation) in a school textbook is used to reflect on the opportunities and challenges of state patronage. The second example concerns SEP's translation of textbooks into MIL, to consider issues of respective access to the means and benefits of text production. The third example is academic/activist collaboration conducted at the CPF, to situate discussion of new media and non-state actors.

### **5.2.1 Language policy and MIL resources: cultural control**

#### **Patronage and access to the means of text production**

To begin with the patronage of the state, this inclusion - of one Totonac text by one Totonac poet into one school textbook in one state - is a small act with nevertheless far-reaching consequences. For example, it correlates MIL-use and text production with the current day, an important conceptual break. School text books have often exposed students only to pre-Hispanic texts and stories of past empires, meaning that students become more (or only) familiar with classical Náhuatl, rather than the local, vernacular varieties in use in their localities. Chapter 2 discussed how the tendency to correlate MIL with the past has been damaging in shaping perceptions of MIL and MIL communities, at the same time as it has been useful in forging national identity and pride in Mexico's cultural roots. As the findings in healthcare showed (Chapter 4), a problem that informants have highlighted is the reductive, diminishing impact of public language policy, so that even the physical presence of MIL speakers is lost from sight and mind. Therefore, even such small steps gain significance – as one contemporary MIL (Totonac) poet writer gains in visibility, so too do all contemporary MIL (Totonac) cultures.

In addition, it offers a long-overdue opportunity to raise consciousness specifically of Totonac language and speakers who, this study argues, have been overlooked, even in their own province and provincial capital. For example, Totonac is the second most widely-spoken MIL in Puebla; however, the pilot for this PhD showed that even students highly interested in MIL failed to mention it when asked about local MIL. Therefore, this platform for Totonac in a school textbook in Puebla increases in one stroke its visibility.<sup>208</sup> Notwithstanding this achievement, fieldwork also attests to a lack of support from pro-MIL state institutions such as INALI, for publishing new Totonac text by young contemporary writers, preferring folktales and transcribed myths from oral tradition – that is, a preference for MIL text which is confined to narrow and iconic representations of cultural identities.

---

<sup>208</sup> An important caveat is the injustice of a single artist or product bearing the burden of depicting a heterogeneous community, and the risk of co-optation into the delimited space that the state is prepared to concede.

As suggested above, issues of patronage and cultural control therefore extend to the semantic and aesthetic content of MIL resources; these issues include their face validity to MIL speakers and the confidence that other audiences can have in their reliability as authentic and contemporary representations. On this point, the second example –SEP’s translation of text books into MIL – makes a useful reference point. At the time fieldwork was being conducted, a primary school text on PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) was being translated into MIL and a version in Náhuatl had become available in Puebla.<sup>209</sup> Although the book’s illustrations depict generically indigenous forms of dress, its content is otherwise unchanged from the Spanish-language original. This quality can function to obfuscate multilingual policy in important ways. First, by simply transposing MIL onto the constructs generated by or speaking to a generic, national, meta-culture, without locating cultural parallels or researching specificity, means that only linguistic forms, rather than ideas, have been diversified. Moreover, such translation functions to lay claim to the constructs on the page (in this case social norms or values) as national patrimony; as such they are transmitted back (in generic form) to regional cultures from which they may well have originated. In other words, an act of cultural control is performed.

These concerns recall Fishman’s (1991) caution that remedies applied by Ymen to Xish can potentially do more harm than good. However, there is no wish here to argue that the state must never produce generic texts for the classroom in all the various languages of the nation, or that MIL texts must confine themselves to faithful transmission of the originating cultures. Indeed, the community engagement of this study (discussed shortly) itself promotes a translation (into KT Totonac, Spanish and English) of a generic, commercial text which has been published in dozens of languages and is dislocated in space and time from an originating culture.

Rather, the second argument relates to the intentions of a text, or more precisely, of a producer, since intentions as well as outcomes determine and guide policy on MIL resources. For example, in the limited body of published text in Totonac (see Chapter 2), producers often fail to specify the language variety and dialect on the page, or situate it against a geographic and cultural territory, or provide other identifiers of a

---

<sup>209</sup> At the time of writing, no equivalent translation in Totonac was available.



specific originating culture. Such imprecision may be unintentional, but cumulatively it functions to communicate a disregard of MIL identities. If only amorphous notions of indigeneity are referenced, the visibility of MIL is apparently increased but knowledge of MIL is obscured.

Moreover, each time cultural control of MIL text is displaced, so cultural control is compromised in wider society. For example, MIL-speaking producers could be commissioned to author, rather than translate, school textbooks identifiably situated in territorial, linguistic and cultural terms. By adding Spanish subtitles, such texts could serve multilingual literacy purposes on the one hand, and socio-cultural education on the other, so that all students, whatever their linguistic background, could gain knowledge of the social constructs and linguistic forms of specific MIL in their local territory.

Meanwhile, another pertinent theme in cultural control and MIL resources is access to the means and benefits of production. This is highlighted by the SEP's commissioning of translation of school textbooks into MIL. In a populous country with highly centralised education system, valuable contracts are available for printing set texts. For this reason, private interests are also interested in securing MIL translations, so as to include these in competitive bids for SEP contracts. In this indirect way, MIL text is acquiring new commodity value and new linguistic markets are being created, a phenomenon noted in other post-independence contexts when public education opens up to local languages (Chimbutane, 2011). Consequently, new sites of contention emerge over their production, control, and deployment as acquire new economic currency (Heller, 2010). Those who are already well-positioned to the means of production can therefore exploit newly valorised linguistic resources and convert them into economic returns.

In the course of fieldwork for this study, a commercial publisher who had already secured a SEP contract by engaging schoolteachers and their students to translate text for primary school workbooks in Náhuatl (without remuneration), sought to replicate the process with this study's informants and publish texts in Totonac. Furthermore, any production costs incurred would be funded from charitable grants rather than the publisher. In effect, all the costs of production of Totonac text were to be widely distributed (across the state, civil society and individual MIL speakers),

while the economic returns would be narrowly concentrated towards a single, dominant agent, a paradigm which mirrors societal minoritisation processes.

Individual cultural entrepreneurs in MIL-communities (translators, writers, poets) may rightly be also motivated by economic or professional ambitions, or hope to accrue social or cultural capital. However, if this return is eclipsed by those benefits accruing to controlling agents in the production of MIL resources (who additionally are non-MIL actors), then the enterprise is seen to exploit, rather than bridge, the gap in cultural control. This skewed distribution of benefits can arguably also be witnessed between the increasing number of quangos on MIL policy (including INALI and the intercultural universities) and their salaried functionaries (both MIL-speaking and non-MIL speaking), and the MIL-speaking client groups or target beneficiaries of such policy. Similarly, a disparity has been seen between the agents who control or who are structurally able to exploit a greater instrumentalisation of MIL cultural patrimony in rural tourism (e.g. the business community) and those who perform this cultural patrimony (see Greathouse, 2005).

On a related theme, it has been argued that the transfer of (gendered) cultural products from indigenous cultures into the formal patronage or public domains (such as tourism) of a dominant culture, trends witnessed in Mexico (Canessa, 2012) and elsewhere in the Americas (Ypeij, 2012), affords them a positive social and economic valorisation, which they do not enjoy when viewed under the exclusive control of their originators. In other words, an enhancement of value signals a form of cultural appropriation and vice-versa. Arguably, this conclusion is also hinted at in another finding of this study, which is that enthusiasm for MIL education appears to be even greater among new speakers (e.g. some students at UIEP) than those raised with MIL in the home. An interpretation is that new speakers can gain the intellectual kudos associated with bilinguality and expertise, without a transfer of the negative social connotations of MIL-use experienced by MIL biculturals.

Meanwhile, a discursive revalorisation of MIL through increased or altered public exposure does not offset disproportionate economic gain among controlling agents, or re-balance asymmetries in power relations between the dominant, appropriator culture, and a marginalised, appropriated culture. As Chapter 2 highlighted and

informants confirmed, serious disparities between urban and rural education, in terms of infrastructure, resources, teachers' salaries and training, are all affecting young people's achievement. Therefore, when discussing the production and instrumentalisation of MIL resources, these issues also need to be problematised.

Therefore, this reflection on policy and MIL resources has included reference to the means and benefits of resource production. As the state increasingly engages with RLS, so opportunities for producing, controlling and deploying MIL resources should be increasing; however, benefits for MIL speakers will not necessarily multiply to the same extent, meaning there is not an equitable correlation between enhanced valorisation (social, linguistic) of MIL on the one hand, and increased benefits (economic) for MIL-speakers on the other. In other words, new speakers of MIL may have something to gain (bilinguality, knowledge, opportunity) and nothing to lose (the value of their identity is unaffected) in the expansion of their linguistic and cultural repertoire; meanwhile, concern from home speakers of MIL over their skills in Spanish belies the extent to which their personal identities are at stake as they negotiate a path through a largely monolingual and monocultural education system, public services and institutions of the nation-state.

Therefore, a new enthusiasm for MIL resources, maintenance and revitalisation among state actors, is to be welcomed, without losing one's perspective on underlying social processes, relationships of power between agents and the exercise of cultural control. The concession of space in schoolbooks or classrooms is not the same as concession of cultural control, and the potential for agents of a dominant national culture to appropriate linguistic and cultural content, and accrue disproportionate economic benefits, will persist without conscious efforts to address such issues. Nevertheless, if political will exists for an expansion of MIL resources, there is cause for both optimism and caution – in other words, precisely the pragmatic sentiment expressed by MIL-speaking informants to the study.

### **5.2.2 Language policy and MIL resources: cultural control**

#### **New media, new actors, new production**

The assumption of the previous argument is that the production of MIL resources and exercise of cultural control is almost inevitably compromised by existing configurations of socio-political inequalities. An important caveat to this is to recall that the state is by no means the only social actor exercising its will in respect of MIL resources. Indeed this study has highlighted the role of independent social actors, such as the CPF, which is directly engaged in their production, and with whom academic/activist collaboration was undertaken. Moreover, it has observed how changing patterns of access to new technologies is also facilitating production of MIL resources in unexpected ways and beyond the cultural control of the state.

Indeed, the disruptive capacity of new media for all aspects of social and linguistic life makes old assumptions regarding cultural control less unassailable. Access to user-friendly tools for virtual as well as physical publishing undermine old paradigms of control in communications. The insertion of ICT resources into the heart of rural, MIL-dominant communities is being facilitated not only by wider patterns of globalisation, but importantly by the state's MIL revitalisation agenda, as seen in the rapid infrastructural change effectuated in Huehuetla/Kgoyom for the construction of the UIEP. That said, it is important to recall that training and access to internet, computers and desk-top publishing had been pioneered in the community by the CPF a decade earlier. Supported by trade unions and private donors, the school had purchased a large satellite receiver and created a computing hub alongside its community library (see Chapter 3). Indeed, it was this community access to ICT facilities which made possible the collaboration associated with this PhD project, to support to the work of Totonac literacy activists based at the CPF.

#### ***Tsikan chu Nipxi' /la Viejita y la Calabaza/ Buri and the Marrow***

The production of text in Totonac has traditionally been for a listening audience rather than a readership. A message (usually from a Spanish-language source, such as a government department), is translated into Totonac primarily to preserve its content and authority, and is then delivered orally by a Totonac-literate bilingual to

an audience which, if unable to understand spoken or written Spanish, is unlikely to have been taught to read Totonac.<sup>210</sup>

One of the tangible outcomes of this academic/activist collaboration was to publish a text which would support local literacy activists based around the CPF, leading to the trilingual talking children's storybook in Kgoyom Totonac, Spanish and English, *Tsikan chu Nipxi' / la Viejita y la Calabaza/ Buri and the Marrow* (see Chapter 3). The original version, *Buri and the Marrow* is a well-known commercial children's title that has been reproduced in dozens of language combinations; it was chosen to deliberately position Kgoyom Totonac within mainstream commercial publishing, and alongside languages traditionally regarded as socially prestigious.<sup>211</sup> The ideologically-motivated UK publisher, Mantra Lingua, who specialise in multilingual, interactive resources for primary schools, used the title to launch an 'Endangered Language Series,' and agreeing to channel back any profit to the producers of the text, rather than vested intermediaries, so as to subsidise free local distribution of the text in KT Totonac-speaking areas.

This decision to translate a mainstream title might be said to side-step the very many contentious issues that have been identified with texts that claim an indigenous identity (see Heiss, 2007; AIATSI 2015). These include issues of literary and aesthetic form and styles; content topics; the identity of the original source, author, illustrator, or editor; the intended readership, and congruence of text production processes (e.g. in decision-making) with the originating culture. In this case, *Tsikan chu Nipxi'* does not claim to reference or represent Totonac linguistic culture(s) any more than it performs this function for Spanish or English, rather, its purpose is to position all three languages alongside one another and correlate them as equally valid

---

<sup>210</sup> An aside is that the headquarters of INALI in Mexico City features permanent multilingual signage indicating floor numbers, lifts, toilets etc., a visual gesture, since MIL monolinguals who cannot read Spanish usually cannot read MIL. More pressing concerns include: a) findings in civil protection/disaster prevention of a lack of oral public education in MIL (e.g. radio broadcasts) in the Sierra Norte in areas prone to landslides, and an over-reliance on Spanish or Náhuatl written text, when many MIL speakers could not read either; see Alcántara-Ayala et al, 2004; b) lengthy direct translations by SEP into Totonac of Spanish language material on basic hygiene and healthcare in response to the H1N1 influenza outbreak, without adaptation for weaker levels of literacy in Totonac: for example, see *¿Tuku militlawat xlakata nitu napaxtokgan akxni nataspita nak minpukgalhtawakga? Pukgalhtawakga xawa Tlan latamat (Versión Tutunakú)* published by the Ministry of Health at <http://www.promocion.salud.gob.mx/>

<sup>211</sup> The same activist caucus, is generating creative writing and poetry in Totonac, transcribing oral literature, translating foreign poetry, and writing and interpreting political messages for broadcast.

media for authentic purposes of text – that is, for entertainment and education.<sup>212</sup> In addition, it situates Totonac text in domains where it has been traditionally absent - public, mainstream, commercial, professional, and international.

Totonac culture has a strong story-telling and oral history tradition. This talking book does not represent it, but neither does it distort or contradict it. One of the most important considerations for publishing children's narratives in endangered languages is that texts are destined to be read aloud to children by a parent, older sibling, teacher, or person with whom the child has an affective bond. In addition, one of the most important aspects of mother tongue transmission is 'for the purposes of intergenerational intimacy and socialisation' (Fishman, 1991:366). Storytelling means that the enjoyment of the narrative, the interaction and bond with the storyteller, and the use of the indigenous language become enmeshed. Likewise, the affective barrier to language acquisition is lowered and language-use becomes associated with positive, interpersonal, intergenerational interaction. In addition, narrative structure engages with patterns of human cognition, language learning and memory, and as a genre, children's narrative lends itself to the reiteration of linguistic items such as lexis and grammatical patterns, facilitating their recall and acquisition in language learning (Hoey, 1979; 2001).

In terms of target users of *Tsikan chu Nipxi*, most parents of informants have not learnt to read Totonac and so can make use of the book's 'talking pen' to scan and hear the narrative spoken (by local voices), and thus potentially develop a measure of Totonac literacy. However, the text is primarily aimed at informants and peers to use with younger siblings, and their own children as they become parents. At CPF, students have become literate in all three languages, but have no access to mainstream text in Totonac. In this way, a pedagogic tool is available for MIL literacy and maintenance. The project highlights how access to new technologies among young MIL-speakers opens new channels and paradigms for MIL publishing. Whereas MIL may have been perceived as functioning only through orality, MIL literacy can quickly gain new currency among a computer literate, smartphone-using generation. In cyber cafés and on social media, MIL text does now originate in a

---

<sup>212</sup> An anecdote is the number of occasions I have been asked (only ever by non-Totonacs) why the text does not portray more 'authentic' Totonac culture, but never asked about the incongruity of locating tigers in a Spanish (or English) -language setting.

MIL context from a MIL source for a MIL readership. As witnessed in other MIL communities (e.g. Yucatan Maya language groups) unexpected new conduits are opening for diverse genres of texts in MIL to be generated and received (Cru, 2015).

Furthermore, ICT tools can offer vehicles which disrupt local social and linguistic orders, establishing direct lines of communication with global, as well as local, audiences or interlocutors, with the potential to consolidate or undermine social marginalisation, depending on issues of access to ICT tools. In this respect, the CPF's pioneering of ICT access in the community was a forerunner to public service provision (in HE only) via the UIEP. Indeed, an argument has been made in this thesis that the technological facility of the UIEP came to a small Totonac-speaking hamlet for political motives because of its prior mobilisation around public services (in education, healthcare and the justice system). However, regardless of motives, the promotion of ICT facilities at UIEP and CPF confirms the adequacy of MIL languages to engage with new tools of communication, at a time when beliefs persist that indigenous languages of the Americas do not lend themselves to ICT.<sup>213</sup>

Research on the engagement by young speakers of indigenous languages with new technologies, and the implications for language valorisation and maintenance, is increasingly emerging in Mexico (see Cru, 2015); elsewhere in the Americas, the new educational opportunities which mobile technology can potentially provide in cash-limited indigenous-language communities, are being explored (Kima, Miranda, & Olaciregui, 2008). In sum, the implication here is that the relationship of young MIL speakers to the means of text production, and their opportunities for its deployment for intercultural communication are unpredictably changed by access to new technologies.

---

<sup>213</sup> For example, as recently as 2012, a study in Paraguay (Grazzi et al, 2012) which claims to take variables of income and education into account, finds that adoption of new technologies is lower among Guaraní-speaking households, and concludes that it must be the language itself which is the obstacle.

### **5.3 Language policy and MIL identities: Discourses of ‘othering’ and linguistic minoritisation**

The previous discussion of language policies has considered the development of MIL skills and resources (in education and public services) based on interpretation of findings and in respect of themes of language maintenance and the social and linguistic valorisation of MIL / MIL speakers. In this section, continuity and change in the management of discourses, beliefs and ideologies of MIL identities is discussed, for example, how discourses appear to be enduring, evolving, or being modified by policy intervention on MIL. A key theme of this thesis - linguistic and social minoritisation - re-emerges as a reference point: for example, how discourses function in reproducing a neo-colonial sociolinguistic order and in ‘othering’ MIL-cultures; and in response, how the revalorisation and revitalisation of MIL is implicated by decolonising praxis for policy and research on MIL.

Findings have shown both enthusiasm and scepticism among informants at the nature of altered discourses in relation to MIL. Their awareness of fixed and shifting attitudes and behaviours towards MIL is arguably heightened; nevertheless, there are occasions when their perceptions of policy change do not appear to correlate with the evidence they offer. For example, educational change in one context – such as the establishment of the UIEP – seems to lead to generalisations about wider policy change. A possible explanation is that, as current or prospective students of the UIEP, they are especially sensitive to its discourses; more significantly perhaps, they are experiencing or anticipating tangible change in their everyday routines and plans, precisely because of the transcendental impact of a single policy instrument (UIEP).

As discussed, aspects of national language policy are materially changing local conditions in MIL-strongholds, exemplified by the UIEP in Huehuetla/Kgoyom. This transformation interconnects with an increasing penetration of the nation-state’s communications and services infrastructure, and national and global markets. As the conditions in which speakers operate change, and the competing political and economic factors implicated in determining, social relations reconfigure, so too is it inevitable that specific new linguistic practices will emerge (Heller 2010:102). One illustration is the new platform of mobile-phone messaging services and social media which increases the use of MIL text.



Notwithstanding the changes currently being generated by the Intercultural Universities, it was already erroneous to characterise communities such as Huehuetla/Kgoyom as pre-modern or remote, and findings have shown that such terms frustrate and even anger informants. Usually, agricultural or subsistence communities in former colonial contexts are already touched by technologically advanced, capitalist markets; some characterise these encroaching processes as globalisation (Cameron, 2005), others typify them as ‘colonialism reincarnated’ (Kamwangamalu, 2008).

From whichever perspective change is interpreted, the enduring maintenance of Totonac in the community, the positive valorisation of MIL among young speakers, and the near consensus in favour of MIL education and revitalisation initiatives, indicate that the environment comprises competing, concurrent forces, each with its own capacity and reach. These can consolidate or disrupt continuity in existing language ideologies, policies, and discourses, or intensify the pace and impact of change. Therefore, continuity and change provide useful reference points for analyses of sociolinguistic attitudes and behaviours in the local environment, with particular regard discourses of MIL and MIL identities.

As discussed in Chapter 1, a key contribution of sociolinguistics has been to illustrate the inextricability of language acts from the construction of social relationships and distribution of social power, both in relatively stable or rapidly changing social contexts. Sociolinguistic analysis has shed light on how everyday discourses function in ‘othering’ human counterparts, by constructing and reproducing concepts of social variables, such as race and gender. In other words, it reveals how language is used for stylising idealised norms, for demarcating those identities which depart from the normative reference and, as is seen in multilingual societies (Freeland, 2003), for positioning these identities relative to one another in hierarchical sociolinguistic order. In such order, entire linguistic communities can be structurally marginalised or minoritised, despite their numerical presence. Whenever change is observed in discourses, it is highly interesting in terms of what it signals (or constitutes) for change in social relationships and shift in sociolinguistic orders. Minoritisation of MIL dates back to the colonial era; however, in the present-day it interconnects with macro-structural processes which are undermining global cultural diversity (see

Chapter 1). Therefore, changing discourses are of keen interest to understanding the present as well as the past.

Contradictorily, if discourse modification is one of the most effective tools for shaping belief systems and cultural practices – such as a ‘routinizing’ of everyday forms of dominance (Ng, 2007) – so an altered lexicon can mask continuity at a more profound level. As some informants suggest (Chapter 4), increasing references to linguistic rights appear tokenistic or misleading, if not matched by tangible policy intervention and observable behavioural change. For example, in the analysis of findings, there is discussion of informants’ responses to specific terms in popular parlance, such as *indio* and *indígena*, (discussed here) and *lengua* and *dialecto* (discussed in the next section). The term ‘*indio*’ is considered highly offensive by many informants; for some, its substitution in state discourses with the term ‘*indígena*’ is more palatable, or even acceptable, but for others it is equally unsavoury (see Chapter 4).

This rejection can also be understood from at least two perspectives: first, that it continues a reductive and colonial sociolinguistic paradigm which has demarcated the micro-and meso-cultures encountered in sites of European colonisation from the macro or meta-cultures transported by the colonizing powers. Across centuries of marginalisation from the centre of power, a multiplicity of discrete, diverse ethnolinguistic cultures have become conceptualised into an amorphous, non-specific whole of generic indigeneity, to borrow a term from Burman (2014). In other words, the lexical item has changed, but its conceptual origin and implications have not.

Second, whichever of the two lexical items is employed, their de-facto function is the same: to facilitate a separation and depiction of human cultures on terms which privilege contemporary national identities compared to historic, autochthonous identities. Whether updating or rejecting the terminology of the colonial past, this social categorisation still culminates in ‘othering’ MIL linguistic cultures from the normative ‘self’ of a constructed national culture; this process further privileges the national culture with defining and depicting (and even laying claim to and assimilating) the identities of ‘others’.

Nonetheless, as noted in Chapter 2, a distinguishing feature of the ideological construction of national identity in Mexico post-independence are the discourses from the state or centre of power which purport to undermine old colonial dichotomies or oppositional positioning of identities. Instead, there is continual tension as the state seeks both to collapse such notions, and to name and claim local cultural identities. Meanwhile, the perspective of MIL communities on national identity, and their analysis of historical processes of identity ascription and management is lacking (López Caballero, 2009) while insufficient regard has been paid to the particularity of MIL cultural difference. In other words, discourses of a unified national identity post-independence may have instrumentalised indigeneity to consolidate conceptual boundaries around the diverse polities of the Republic, but have not resolved lingering tensions within it of 'selves' and 'others'.

These issues were acutely highlighted by informants' responses to the 2010 census question on identity, and speak to an urgent need for also reflecting on and decolonising research praxis. The academy necessarily constructs conceptual boundaries as it delimits and guards what is to be considered knowledge; at the same time, these actions and discourses also sustain notions of social identities (and distribute power between them) by borrowing from its colonial past. For example, in the endangered language literature there is critique of 'the unquestioned normative ascendancy and use' of conventions in research and publication which function in the 'hegemonic construction and imposition of western knowledge and the concomitant delegitimation of indigenous knowledges' (May & Aikman, 2003: 139). Academic traditions on the one hand can lend legitimacy to researchers' identities and parameters of inquiry, and on the other hand, can impede the transfer and reception of indigenous ideas, delegitimising the epistemologies of indigenous linguistic cultures. In other words, the structural (including linguistic) minoritisation of social identities is not only replicated in state actions and discourses, such as the 2010 census question, but is facilitated by the premises of academic inquiry.

Therefore, paradoxes emerge (in both the arenas of policy and research) whereby changing discourses can speak of interculturality and cross-cultural encounter, yet opportunities for MIL cultures to engage in authentic self-portrayal and autonomous cultural exposition are continually compromised. Indeed, endangered language research arguably contributes to this pattern by too often facilitating the

documentation and description of linguistic cultures for external consumption, using research processes which disproportionately benefit agents external to the language community (in rewards of academic or professional prestige). In other words, modified discourses (moving from *indio* to *indígena*) is to an extent functioning to obfuscate ideological continuity. Even apparently *indigenista* or indigenist discourse can function to obscure the persistence and tenacity of minoritising ideologies, rather than indicate their instability (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012). Therefore, the extent to which evolution in the lexicon referring to MIL and MIL speakers signifies conceptual and behavioural change should be interrogated rather than assumed.

An implication for this discussion of (contested) identities and their discursive (re)construction, is the need for alternative, more tangible or measurable indicators of ideological and political shift in social relations. For this reason, in discussion of MIL education policy, this thesis has referenced cultural control (Bonfil Batalla, 1983) in terms of the socio-economic aspects of the production of MIL resources, and has reflected on continuity and change in the relationships between agents and their respective access to the means of production.

Returning to the specific issue of identity and ‘othering’, this study’s findings express a flavour of the unease among informants at descriptors used by the 2010 census question. Regardless of whether some confusion exists concerning the etymology of *indígena* (that is, its morphological resemblance to *indio*), it can be argued that, in effect, informants make no mistake in the conclusions they draw from the use of such a term. Whether *indio* or *indígena*, the enduring social function of the term supersedes its changing linguistic form. Those informants who are sceptical of the nation-state’s enquiry into identities in effect suspect that a change of lexis masks conceptual continuity. Such scepticism is a reminder that discourses of identities have been exploitative, with socio-historically constructed and hierarchically positioned dichotomies of colonial ‘selves’ and native ‘others’, each imbued with values that compound the privilege of the former, and deduct status from the latter.

The point of interest, however, is that pejorative colonialist characterisations of MIL cultures have been constructed by more than discursive practices, and for more than ideological purposes. Rather, they were constructed to facilitate tangible exploitation and were embedded by viscerally oppressive, harmful behaviours. For this reason,

the thesis gives prominence to themes of harm and well-being in its interpretation of research findings and discussions of policy on MIL. Harmful notions can be eroded through modified discourses; however, without commensurate, tangible change elsewhere, their persistence can be obscured by altered discourses.

In other words, the business of ‘othering’ human counterparts and creating false and pejorative narratives of MIL cultures, once supported the purposeful colonial enterprise of economic resource extraction; today the risk is that modified discourses may mask continuity of harmful ideologies, and that such obfuscation may disarm effective resistance to a socio-economic exploitation of MIL cultures. As such, there is also a need to avoid disproportionate focus on abstract issues of identities, over these more tangible and situated issues of well-being. This is not to deduct merit from analysis of these discourses of identities - indeed, this study is reiterating its relevance. It notes how some new speakers of MIL claim the identity of ‘indigenous’, whilst mother-tongue MIL-speakers reject any form of the label (Chapter 4). Rather, the argument is for a sense of proportionality, because it follows that when abstract notions of social identity connote prestige and power to one party, there are negative implications for others, which are viscerally experienced, for example, when MIL-monolinguals are overlooked by Spanish-speaking hospital clinic staff (Chapter 4) or when urban, Spanish monolingual publishers of MIL text disproportionately accrue economic benefit, over the linguistic producers of MIL texts; or when the funding and accreditation gained by commentators of indigenous linguistic cultures, is not matched by academic opportunities extended to MIL communities.

Finally, this discussion of identities recalls the importance of keeping in view not only the broad lens of group membership, but also the subjectivity of MIL speakers and individual experiences. If MIL speakers are too readily objectified as a social class, there is a risk of overlooking the nuances and inconsistencies of concurrent ideologies and policies which constitute the lived experience. Rather, both broad and narrow perspectives are required simultaneously to comprehend young MIL biculturals as individual, integral subjects with distinct, personal needs and choices, and experiences and interests that diverge as well as converge.

### 5.3.1 Language policy and MIL identities: discourses of change and continuity

*‘unless it is actually put into practice and made the same as Spanish, nothing is ever going to change, it’s just something they make speeches about...’*<sup>214</sup>UIEP 31

- informant on linguistic rights for MIL speakers

Returning to changing discourses of identities, an area where the state is actively intervening is on the issue of how popular parlance refers to MIL languages, with a multi-media public education campaign entitled ‘my language is not a dialect’.<sup>214</sup> This misnomer is still widely employed in Mexico to refer to MIL, by speakers who can reasonably be assumed to be unaware of its inaccurate, reductive connotations. However, there are two important caveats to this assumption.

First, its popular use, and the offence it encodes, may well be unwitting on the part of the individual speaker; however, its insertion into the lexicon is not. Rather, the phenomenon whereby MIL have come to be known as *dialectos*, whilst Mexican Spanish has always been described as a *lengua*, is testimony to an enduringly colonial paradigm in which sociolinguistic concepts are generated. As Betancourt (1983) states, a pre-condition for one linguistic group to exercise political and social control over another is to foster devalorisation of dominated, native languages (1983:399) and such devalorising ideologies then ‘[take] on flesh in local social relations’ (Smith, 2004:405). The conceptual equation of multiple, diverse, discrete, autochthonous, regional, and local languages and language families (i.e. MIL), with dialectal variations of a single imported norm (i.e. Spanish), is an effective example of ideological reductionism and pervasive language devalorisation.

Second, the term *dialecto* is also employed less naively and more purposefully by individual speakers. As observed during fieldwork, it concisely communicates a speaker’s attitudes that belittle the character of both MIL and MIL speakers. In other words, the term is instrumentalised to encode negative positionality toward a social group (Jaffe, 2012) and functions in sustaining such marginalisation. As such, the public education campaign carries important symbolic and didactic value. While not invulnerable to criticism (e.g. its recourse to an arguably generic indigenous

---

<sup>214</sup> Launched in 2015 by Oaxacan federal authorities collaborating with INALI

aesthetic), it does embody an action by authorities to alter linguistic practices, and to foster ideological shift. Moreover, it indicates political will by agents exercising budgetary control over public funds, to effect sociolinguistic change which positively valorises perceptions of MIL.<sup>215</sup>

This study's findings suggest that alongside *dialecto*, there is also objection to use of the term '*lengua*'. This term can translate literally as 'tongue' as well as 'language'; among those who object, the preferred term is '*idioma*', namely, use of the same term that school curricula associate with prestige languages such as English and French. This is despite the use of '*lengua*' by pro-MIL state institutions such as UIEP and INALI, evident in the title of the campaign '*mi lengua no es un dialecto*'. As with reactions to the use of *indígena* by the 2010 census, this attests to a level of consciousness among young MIL biculturals of the power of discourses in the formation of sociolinguistic ideologies and policies. Moreover, it positions them at odds with formal discourses of the state, including the discourses of one of their own education providers (UIEP). Therefore, the implication is that other discursive and conceptual constructs concerning MIL and MIL speakers can be usefully critiqued by young MIL biculturals, and this further signals how crucial is their participation in or leadership of MIL policy formulation.

Issues of self-representation have gained renewed purchase in Mexico following the successful instrumentalisation of discourses of (MIL) identity in political organising in the late twentieth century. It is probably not incidental that the public education campaign around *dialecto* was launched in Oaxaca (which adjoins Puebla) where there has been prolonged political unrest; on the other hand, its linguistic and cultural diversity is also being heavily instrumentalised in efforts to promote its tourism industry and expand its domestic and international markets (Goertzen, 2010).

Moreover, an increase in media campaigns which reference MIL cultures can be observed. The extent to which these function to reorient MIL discourses, to alter the ideological positioning, or to mask ideological continuity, is pertinent. One example is the instrumentalisation of MIL identity markers (e.g. dress and hair) in electoral propaganda. In the 2012 elections, posters in Huehuetla/Kgoyom showed presidential

---

<sup>215</sup> Conversely, in post-independence societies, language policy carries specific potential as pro-government propaganda. In Mozambique, Chimbutane argues that the introduction of education in local as well as colonial languages is 'the state's way to reconcile itself with the masses' (2011: 161).



candidate Enrique Peña Nieto with the local PRI candidate, a female with fair skin and a short hairstyle (both of which reference *mestizo* culture), but dressed in a hand-made ‘indigenous’ blouse (non-Western, routinely worn in MIL communities but not by *mestizo* women). However, the cut, pattern and colours signal a different ethnolinguistic group to the local Totonac target audience (styles vary across cultural groups). Meanwhile, the poster for his political rival, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, depicted him embracing a woman with dark complexion and hair (long and tied back) and a plain dress (rather than the ubiquitous jeans of *mestizo* culture), all of which index rurality (and by association MIL, even without the traditional dress of specific linguistic cultures).

In other words, the instrumentalisation of these cultural markers connects with the perceptions of young MIL biculturals who detect competing concurrent ideologies and discourses of identity. At the same time as public actors seek to discursively re-position themselves in relation to MIL speakers (with varying degrees of success), so too language ideologies and policies persist which minoritise MIL speakers (as seen in public services). Despite, or because of this complexity, the concept of linguistic minoritisation is reiterated in this thesis as a lens for scanning the sociolinguistic environment. It aids evaluation of the purpose and outcomes of language policies, and keeps the focus steered towards the everyday indicators of quality of life for embodied MIL speakers, rather than on the character of imagined identities.

Indeed, the discussion of ‘othering’ has recalled two key themes of this study: first, identifying and interpreting the discourses, ideologies and policies which function in the minoritisation of MIL; and second, decolonising the praxis of language policies and research. Mutual feedback between the two objectives means that positively revalorising MIL cultures and countering minoritisation necessitates a decolonising approach. Moreover, the extent to which conscious or implicit resistance to processes of linguistic and cultural minoritisation exists among young biculturals is of particular interest to both policy and research. All such perspectives discussed can be short-handed with the concept of *buen vivir*; in other words, by filtering ideologies, interventions, discourses, and practices for observable repercussions in social and linguistic well-being.



#### **5.4 Conclusion: implications of research findings in language management**

This study has argued that in all these debates, it is the experiential expertise of informants which is most illuminating; it is not only in research where the participation and direction of young MIL biculturals should be regarded as integral, but in the construction of multilingual policy. Their standpoint and theorisation of context clarifies the operation of false narratives of MIL cultures, and rectifies skewed perspective and minoritising notions. Their personal investment in debunking myths helps to reconstruct conceptualisations of MIL communities and social identities. Therefore centrality is given throughout to the qualitative data of informants, even where contradictory opinion exists, since these nuances reflect an authentic complexity in lived experience with concurrent, competing social forces.

A decolonising approach should view research and policy proposals by external agents, however well-intentioned, as inadequate, and should first negotiate how to engage with objectives of cultural control by MIL speakers, and equity and transparency in processes. This is not solely an argument for greater informant participation, or for privileging the heuristic expertise and insight of informants, important as they are. Rather, the argument is that the praxis of a decolonising approach should also problematise the leadership and ownership of research, the distribution of all implicated research resources, e.g. knowledge, skills, books, equipment, grants; and share of all associated rewards, e.g. accreditations, qualifications, promotions, publications, royalties, salaries.

Moreover, a decolonising approach should commit to building research capacity within MIL communities to investigate, monitor, and address both linguistic loss and maintenance and social well-being. For these reasons, this study piloted the training of informant researchers, produced a literacy resource, and transferred academic resources as part of its project design. Every research encounter, as any other social interaction, can compound or counteract minoritisation to some extent, for instance, by ignoring or acknowledging inequalities of access to research resources.

In terms of MIL speakers' long-term access to research resources, the government's decision to invest in intercultural universities in MIL-strongholds has been significant for young MIL speakers in the community under study, and opens new possibilities for research capacity and infrastructure within MIL communities. Under

the UIEP's present leadership, this opportunity (which is certainly not unproblematic) is being evidenced in the form of resource inputs and research outputs. As such, there are new means and opportunities for young MIL biculturals to participate in (and potentially to drive) MIL research. Notwithstanding, the survival and enduring autonomy of the (unfunded, independent) CPF, the only Totonac-governed high school, is testament to the capacity of MIL communities to take cultural control and deliver policy excellence, even with minimal resources.

A criticism levelled at the endangered language research community is that its discourses pay insufficient attention to '[articulating] the alternative ecologies in which endangered languages can be revitalised (Mufwene, 2005:42). This latter mention of CPF's autonomy is placed here to reiterate the alternative political and socio-economic ecology in which the CPF emerged and has been sustained. This objective of autonomy, that Smith (2004:405) argues informed the mobilisation of the OIT (who founded the school), is also characterised by him as more a pursuit of political agency than cultural purism. As this thesis has also argued, such autonomy or reconfiguration of social relations can function not only to counter linguistic minoritisation, but as important, can facilitate greater cultural control over the fundamental resources that shape the pattern of Totonac lives and determine well-being or *tlán talatamat* [*buen vivir*].

## **Chapter 6      Conclusion: contesting language ideologies and policies**

This thesis has examined how language ideologies and policies in Mexico are perceived to function in three key public services (education, healthcare and policing), by young speakers of endangered, indigenous languages (primarily K'goyom Totonac) and has considered the extent to which their analysis is usefully aided by notions of language valorisation and minoritisation. It has considered the everyday implications of interconnected language ideologies, policies, and discourses for the well-being of the embodied MIL speaker, so that understanding is gained both of how these are articulated as practices in specific domains, and also as conceptualisations of linguistic rights and identities.

The study began by engaging with the literature to deconstruct the social and linguistic valorisation of a linguistic culture, and to examine how social value is ascribed to identity through language ideologies and policies. Hence, the study's research questions and themes have been less concerned with dissecting or interpreting the indigeneity or otherwise of young people's habits and lifestyles, and more with identifying and deconstructing the valorisation element of attitudes and behaviours towards persons identified with Totonac and other MIL cultures by virtue of their language-use. The second chapter of the thesis situated such ideologies and policies by providing an overview of Mexico's recent sociolinguistic past and its pursuit of post-independence national identity, while Chapter 3 provided contextualisation for the specific fieldwork location of young MIL biculturals who contribute to this study

Their perspective has been gained on language-use in education, healthcare and policing (Chapter 4), and the focus of discussion has centred on the embodied speaker and individual and collective well-being. In a similar fashion, notions of cultural control and *buen vivir* have been employed as measures in such analysis, and all these concepts and objectives have been discussed in relation to decolonising praxis and policy implications, which also encompasses context-sensitive and socially-engaged research. At the heart of the thesis is the theorisation and experiential expertise of young Totonac and MIL/Spanish biculturals, which informs the analysis of findings, policy implications and conclusions

Informants almost unanimously support an expansion of MIL education. Ironically, when they reflect on the encounter between the state (in healthcare and policing) and their own language community, findings reveal both the utility and futility of proficient MIL language skills. On the one hand, biculturals must routinely exploit their capacity in MIL to intermediate between (MIL) monolingual service users and (Spanish) monolingual service providers; on the other hand, such actions might be reinforcing young people's professed concern to acquire highly fluent Spanish language skills. Meanwhile in education, MIL disappear from the domain during most of the young people's academic careers, only to latterly reappear in the new intercultural universities for the (tiny minority of) MIL-speakers who nationally progress to HE. It is in this context that, even amongst the apparently overwhelming support for teaching or learning through MIL, caution is also expressed towards any policy that potentially jeopardises their development of fully proficient and confident oral and written skills in Spanish (and thus secure their linguistic access to services and opportunities).

If MIL speakers in a rural subsistence community are already experiencing structural disadvantage in accessing public services, then any issue of language management compounds such marginalisation. In education, this likely is a factor that undergirds national under-achievement by MIL-speakers, and in respect of healthcare and policing, this exacerbates risks and contributes to preventable harms. Indeed, healthcare is an arena where linguistic discrimination could be more readily deconstructed into its constituent elements of commission and omission that combine to discourage and devalorise the use of autochthonous languages; in respect of policing, both the actions and inaction of law enforcement officers also demarcated MIL-speakers in ways which, by default and/or design, minoritise their linguistic communities, and more importantly, place individuals at risk.

On the issue of minoritisation, the sifting of data for devalorising attitudes and behaviours has identified recurrent lexical items that share the common semantic function of diminishing the concepts they reference – in this case, the social stature of the non-Spanish speaking user of MIL. This subtractive function operates across a range of concepts (speaker, language, knowledge, culture) in a range of domains and is expressed as both unwitting and purposeful oversight, deduction or reduction, depreciation or devalorisation. The more pressing concern is the impact of such

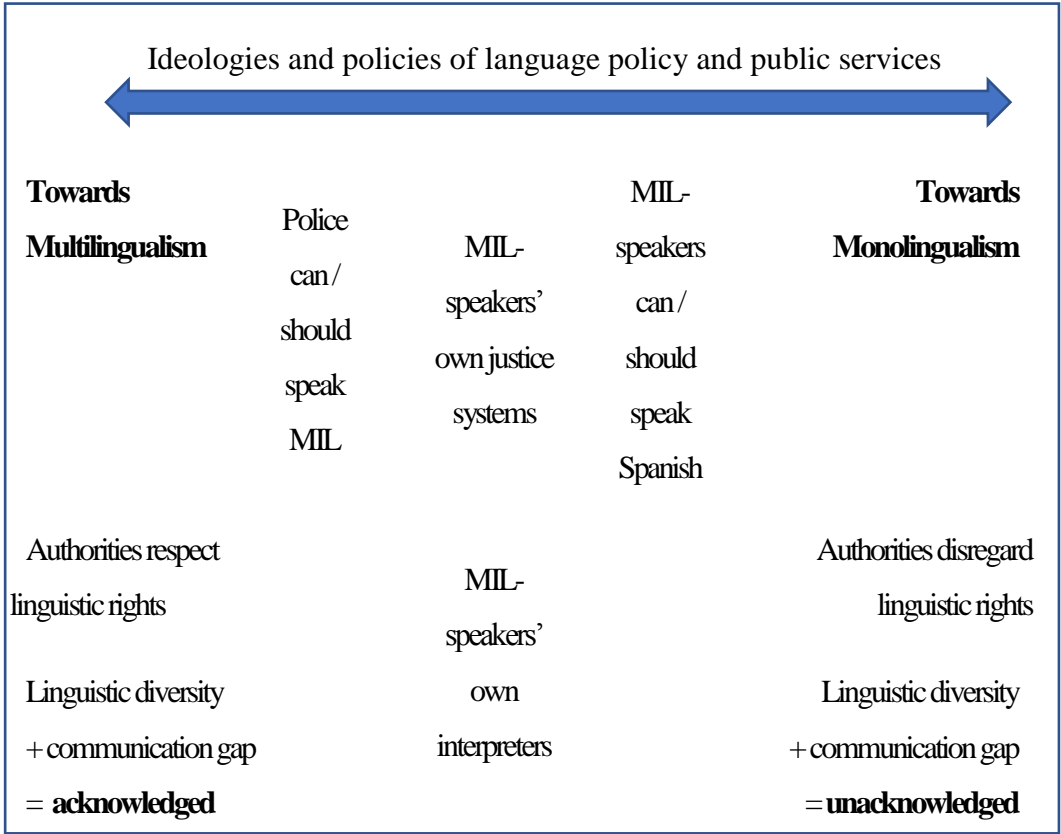
language ideologies and policies on the well-being of embodied speakers today, as well as on the vitality of the linguistic culture tomorrow.

An issue noted in the literature which also featured in this study's findings is a sense of the embarrassment at using MIL in (public) domains where it does not 'belong', i.e. at engaging in transgressive linguistic behaviours. However, one informant's rationale neatly summarises the connection between linguistic discrimination and MIL speakers' contingent behaviours, when he notes that 'some people do not talk in Totonac anymore because they are embarrassed to speak their own language; because they think that they will be ridiculed for speaking it, that's why it suits them better to talk in Spanish.'<sup>CPF 10</sup> This theorisation of a cause - effect relationship between external social processes (derisory attitudes towards MIL) and internal responses (embarrassment and reluctance to use MIL) may appear self-evident, but its logic has at times been obscured, precisely because other minoritising concepts (which diminish the values of reason and logic from MIL and MIL speakers' behaviours) are so pervasive. Great care must be taken not to allow narratives to be constructed in which MIL speakers are characterised as embarrassed about using MIL (in effect, architects of their own culture's decline), rather than embarrassed *into* not using MIL. This is not a minor point of semantics, but rather a reminder of the symbolic violence of ideologies and policies which foster behaviours of language reticence and abandonment.

With this in mind, when the implications of findings in education, healthcare and policing were considered, (Chapter 5), these were discussed less in terms of the needs of individual MIL speakers, clients or learners, and more in terms of the wider development of skills and resources to support societal bilinguality. Indeed, in the conclusions on language management and public services, a simple principle is that public language practices should be more reflective of the existing multilingual character of the local environment, and more affirmative of the widespread and unobtrusive everyday translanguaging practices of young people. Indeed, from the perspective of young people for whom bilinguality is an unremarkable fact, it is perhaps to be expected that they can readily hypothesise alternative scenarios of language management, especially in respect of linguistic rights.

Linguistic rights can appear to be abstract, intangible notions; however the positionality and experience of informants reveal the personal consequences when linguistic rights are compromised in the everyday lives of real, embodied, speakers. Furthermore the inequity between language groups in prevailing sociolinguistic order is consolidated by a hierarchical ascription of differentially-valued communicative functions and social domains to differently valued languages. That said, this configuration (of language valorisation by domain or function) is also vulnerable insofar as it becomes susceptible to transgression in simple, mundane acts of everyday policy, such as a nurse or police officer who knows how to speak MIL, doing so, as and when the need arises; similarly, by school staff not preventing students from chatting with their peers in MIL in the classroom or on campus. Figure 6.1 (below) summarises the discussion of linguistic rights (using policing in this case), to show how current, intermediate and idealised conceptualisations of linguistic rights could be situated along a continuum from monolingualism to multilingualism.

**Figure 6.1 models ideologies and policies of MIL on a continuum using policing as an example**



In terms of ideological shift, an important observation from findings is that in order for minoritising discourses of MIL to persist, more determinant than the character of individual devalorising concept, is the knit of multiple false notions, since it is this overlay which provides tensile structure to otherwise weak, untenable concepts. At the same time, this means that even seemingly ubiquitous, pervasive, hegemonic discourses are no more than a reiteration of concepts lacking discrete empirical value, meaning that even modest interventions can facilitate a piecemeal deconstruction of discourses, and have value beyond their apparent scope. For example, public education on misuse of the term ‘dialect’ to refer to MIL has a clear, if limited surface function, but is potentially even more meaningful for destabilising a precarious web of minoritising discourses and policies.

Therefore, the modest actions of young MIL biculturals which transgress minoritising norms of language use may also have significance beyond their apparent character. For example, the spontaneous, authentic, peer-focussed use of MIL and MIL text with ICT, such as messaging between young MIL biculturals, which may have no consciously ideological purpose, can still be significant in terms of reconfiguring the paradigm for ‘acceptable’ uses of MIL and its social valorisation. Perhaps even this tight weave of ideologies, policies, and discourses means it is more possible, rather than less, to confront the RLS challenge – instead of facing a solid wall, one can proceed with small, achievable measures of pulling at single, loose threads to unpick an entire weave of devalorising language management policies, and de facto, communicate ideological shift, in a virtuous circle.

This potential of young MIL biculturals is a reminder of the need to keep speakers’ subjectivity in view and not allow a shared experience of discrimination to blur lines between individuals, whereby subjects are reduced to social categories. A feature of minoritising discourses is to obscure personhood, and reduction and invisibility are themes that emerged in the data to characterise the experience of speakers of MIL (with implications for civic and human rights). Furthermore, such subjectivity, resilience, and insight into ideologies and policies means it is feasible to re-imagine the design of language policy with the participation of young MIL biculturals. Even though the informants for this study are situated within highly distinct institutions - the autonomous CPF and the state-controlled UIEP - the common thread between the institutions is a belief (and investment) in their academic potential; the common

thread in this thesis between these cohorts is their capacity and desire to counteract minoritisation and promote and engender active valorisation of MIL.

The cultural consciousness evident at the CPF and its heterogeneous educational practice interconnects valorisation of linguistic identity with aspirations of academic achievement among MIL-speakers, and recalls that sociolinguistic interventions are not the sole preserve of the state. Although the unique context and character of the CPF may not appear to be easily replicable, the same generation of informants is also disposed towards state actors such as the UIEP, and sees potential to positively impact both their own skills and the valorisation and vitality of their linguistic cultures. In other words, there is no simple oppositional binary of state/grassroots to resolve in either MIL education or RLS, yet it remains highly pertinent that CPF has been able to innovate and enhance the education offer for MIL speakers through an intimate and participative nexus to the originating linguistic culture. As the assassination of the school's founder testifies (Chapter 3), Totonac cultural control over education came at a high price; it is a reminder, along with the findings on policing, that the sociolinguistic minoritisation of a culture is also set against a continuum of attitudes and actions which contain degrees of harm, including the experience, fear or memory of violence. Nevertheless, the existence and persistence of MIL-led initiatives such as the CPF are also testament to the transformative potential of small autonomous actions.

A basic template (shown below in Figure 6.2) conceptualises how policy discussions might be approached in terms of actions which range in complexity and cost-implications and which can be characterised as moving from a start point which is permissive of bilinguality, through intermediate actions which require a positive action, towards policy which is more progressive insofar as it is transformative of the socio-bases to linguistic minoritisation. Having reiterated the cruciality of young MIL biculturals for deconstructing language management and for monitoring, leading and reviewing bilingual policy, it is not for this thesis to now proscribe measures or conflate its own recommendations. Rather, Figure 6.2 simply emphasises in visual form how the potential exists for immediate policy consultation and formulation with young MIL-biculturals, and on the other hand, pro-Xish policy by and for Xmen can be effectuated with longer-term structural goals in mind. Indeed, the CPF, in its aspirational approach to education, offers a model within the



community for addressing linguistic and cultural defence holistically, that is, in tandem with socio-economic goals and whilst exercising cultural control.

**Figure 6.2 models a template for a consultation process with young MIL-speakers on language policy using education and healthcare as examples**

	permissive	positive	progressive
<b>Discourses</b>	consciousness-raising of local MIL linguistic and cultural heritage and profile	consciousness-raising of RLS and local socio-economic context	consciousness-raising around forms of linguistic and ethnic discrimination
<b>Skills</b>	<p>allowing and encouraging the use of MIL between students on school / college campuses</p> <p>allowing and encouraging an uncensored use of MIL in public healthcare facilities and services, both among and between MIL-speaking staff and clients</p>	<p>extra-curricular, inter-generational activities to foster local MIL linguistic and cultural maintenance</p> <p>explicit recruitment of bilingual school staff / public servants and bilingual communication between parents and teachers / functionaries and clients / medical staff and patients</p>	<p>subsidised bilingual teacher training targeted at MIL – speakers, especially in STEM subjects and new media / technologies</p> <p>subsidised nursing, healthcare and medical training targeting MIL-speaking high-school graduates in MIL-strongholds</p>
<b>Resources</b>	MIL as an object of study	<p>production of bilingual educational materials</p> <p>production of bilingual healthcare resources for interpreters</p>	<p>MIL and Spanish as medium of instruction and employment</p> <p>adaptation of curriculum and materials to support local MIL maintenance</p>

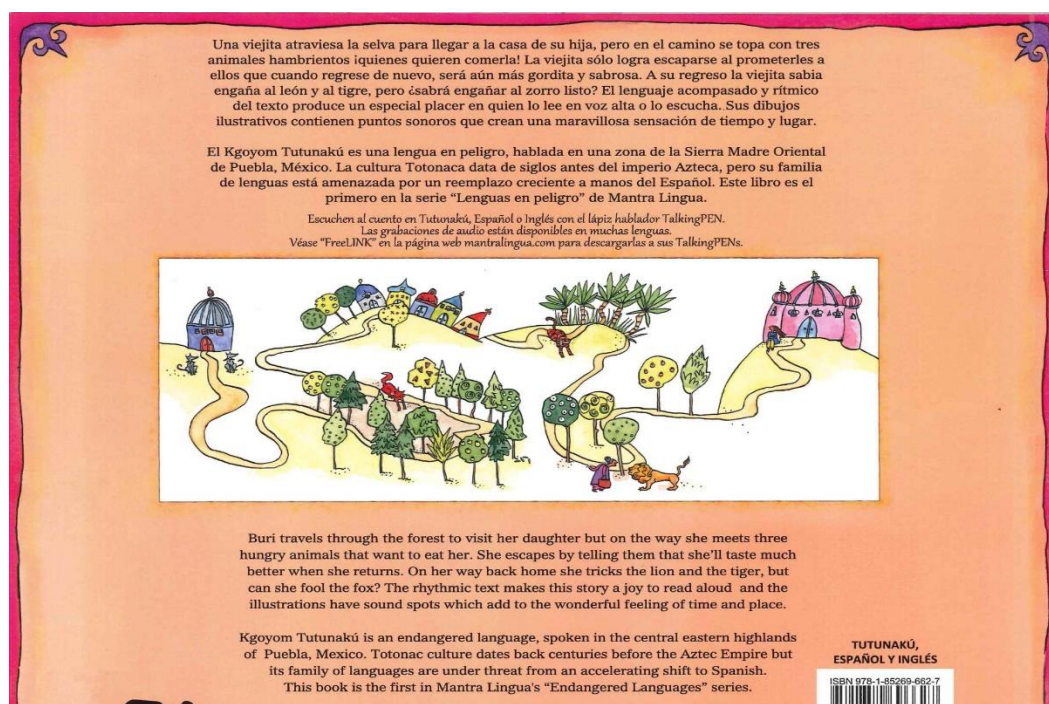
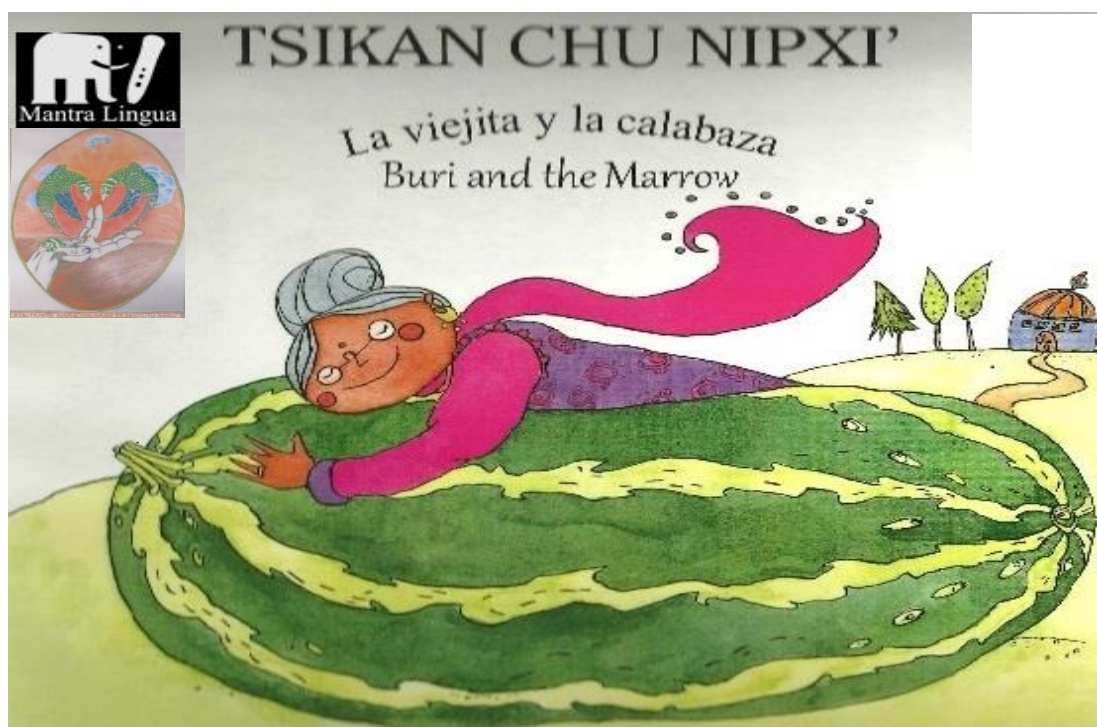
That said, this thesis has been careful to communicate that the character of the CPF and the political mobilisation in Huehuetla/Kgoyom out of which it emerged should not be read primarily in terms of indigenist discourses. Rather, it was and is by the exercise of greater cultural control that prime objectives of social equity in key areas of public policy, e.g. education, could be articulated. In effect, linguistic identity was instrumentalised, so that ideologies of social justice were short-handed as ‘Totonac’; however, none of these actions was culturally essentialist. Rather, they represent strategic, holistic responses which respond to the socio-economic character of cultural and linguistic minoritisation. If the trajectory of the OIT or the CPF were only viewed through the lens of linguistic identity and indigeneity, this would place limits around both their objectives and their significance as agents of social change in historic context – and distort the broader socio-economic concerns of groups marginalised from public resources into the narrower confines of cultural identity.

Research and policy on MIL maintenance should begin and end with a linguistic culture’s capacity to secure a safe, healthy, educated future for its young people, and to reproduce its culture (including, but not limited to, its speech forms). In this thesis, these concepts have been short-handed as *buen vivir*. In this way, research into endangered language management has anchored its discussions not only to questions of discourses of identities and policies on language resources and skills, but to the everyday enjoyment of civic, linguistic and human rights, tangible well-being, reduction of harms, and freedom from violence; in other words, a project as urgent as the haste to describe disappearing linguistic codes.

## Appendix 1

### Tsikan Chu Nipxi' / La Viejita y la Calabaza / Buri and the Marrow

Talking Book and Pen in separate cover



## Appendix 2 CPF Questionnaire

**This is a reproduction of questions in their entirety but for considerations of space, not a reproduction of their layout; similarly, for the sake of word-count, translation into English is not provided as examiners are Spanish -speaking**

### **CUESTIONARIO ALUMNOS DEL COLEGIO PAOLO FREIRE INSTRUCCIONES:**

Número de alumn@ \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

*Favor de responder cada pregunta, marcando la casilla que corresponda con tu respuesta, y luego explícate más escribiendo en los espacios incluidos. Escribe todo lo que tú quieras – si tus comentarios no caben en el espacio dado, continúa en el reverso de la hoja, **poniendo el número de la pregunta a la que se refieren.***

- *PARTE UNO*
- *DATOS PERSONALES (ES ANÓNIMO)*
- *Edad*
- *Sexo*
- *pueblo / comunidad*
- *Grado de bachillerato actual*
- *Mi situación es otra ( ) favor de explicarse aquí*
- *¿Piensas ir a la universidad?*
- *Si dijiste que SÍ arriba, ¿irías a la Universidad Intercultural?*
- *Ahora explica ¿por qué quieres ir a la universidad?*
- *Si dijiste que NO quieres ir a la universidad, ¿Qué piensas hacer cuando termines bachillerato?*
- *¿Por qué elegiste estudiar en el Colegio Paulo Freire? ¿Por qué no fuiste a otra preparatoria?*
- *¿Hablas totonaco?*
- *Ahora elige la categoría de abajo que te describa mejor y si quieres añadir algún comentario, hazlo*
- *soy completamente bilingüe (tononaco y español) – me expreso plenamente en las dos lenguas*
- *manejo totonaco y español – pero me expreso mejor en totonaco*
- *manejo totonaco y español – pero me expreso mejor en español*
- *no hablo totonaco pero me gustaría hablarlo o hablarlo mejor*
- *no hablo totonaco y me es indiferente hablarlo o hablarlo mejor*
- *mi categoría es otra – explica plenamente aquí por favor*
- *¿Hablas otra lengua originaria de México, ej. El náhuatl o zapoteco etc.?*
- *¿Algún comentario sobre las lenguas que hablas, o cómo prefieres describir tu identidad lingüística?*
- *En tu vida profesional y personal, ¿crees que existe o existirá alguna ventaja en ser bilingüe de totonaco (u otra lengua originaria de México) y el castellano? Explica tu respuesta ...*
- *¿Realizaste estudios de primaria?    Sí, en Huehuetla    Sí, en otro lugar*
- *¿Dónde?*
- *No, no cursé primaria*

- *Mi situación es otra ( ) favor de explicarse aquí ...*
- *¿Cuántos años de primaria cursaste en total?*
- *¿Qué lengua(s) usaron los maestros para enseñar?*
- *Si en la escuela usaron más de una lengua, explica como hicieron las cosas*
- *Háblame de lo que recuerdas de primaria, de lo bueno, lo malo, lo divertido, lo aburrido, dime todo lo que puedas y quieras*
- *En la primaria, ¿los maestros trataron a todos los alumnos igual? ¿Notaste alguna diferencia en el trato de los maestros con los alumnos que hablaban totonaco comparado con los alumnos que hablaban castellano? Explica lo que recuerdas, con ejemplos si puedes*
- *Realizaste estudios de secundaria?*
- *Sí, presencial en Huehuetla*
- *Sí, telesecundaria en Huehuetla*
- *Mezcla de las dos cosas en Huehuetla*
- *Sí, presencial en otro lugar (¿dónde?)*
- *Sí, telesecundaria en otro lugar (¿dónde?)*
- *Mezcla de las dos cosas en otro lugar (¿dónde?)*
- *No, no cursé secundaria*
- *Mi situación es otra (favor de explicarse aquí)*
- *¿Cuántos años de secundaria cursaste en total?*
- *¿Qué lengua(s) usaron los maestros para enseñar? Si en la secundaria usaron más de una lengua, explica cómo hicieron las cosas*
- *Hábla de lo que recuerdas de secundaria, lo bueno, lo malo, lo divertido, lo aburrido, dime todo lo que puedas y quieras*
- *En la secundaria, ¿los maestros trataron a todos los alumnos igual? ¿Notaste alguna diferencia en el trato de los maestros con los alumnos que hablaban Totonaco, comparado con los alumnos que hablaban castellano? Explica lo que recuerdas, con ejemplos si puedes*
- *Durante primaria y secundaria, ¿estudiaste lenguas? Marca todas las callas que correspondan Totonaco Español / Castellano Náhuatl Inglés Otra ¿Cuál?*
- *¿Has estudiado alguna lengua fuera de las escuelas? Sí ¿cuál? ¿Por qué?*



## **PARTE DOS: ANTECEDENTES LINGÜÍSTICOS**

### **RESPONDE TODAS LAS PREGUNTAS CON DETENIMIENTO POR FAVOR**

#### **TU MAMÁ** (o quien te cuida como una mamá)

- ¿Tu **mamá** sabe más de una lengua? SÍ ( ) ¿Cuál o cuáles?  
NO ( ) solo habla una ¿Cuál es? \_\_\_\_\_
- Si **tu mamá** sabe más de una lengua, explica abajo lo siguiente:
- ¿Cuál lengua crees que **tu mamá usa más** en la vida diaria?
- ¿**Con qué personas** tu mamá habla **en totonaco** o **con qué personas** habla **en español** u otras lenguas? Da ejemplos específicos, por ejemplo, ‘mi mamá siempre habla con los vecinos en español pero habla con su hermana y con sus padres (mis abuelos) en totonaco’
- ¿Para hacer **qué cosas** tu mamá habla **en totonaco** y para hacer **qué cosas** usa la(s) **otra(s) lenguas**? Por ej.
- ‘mi mamá habla en totonaco para comprar tortillas pero usa español cuando compra artículos de ropa en el mercado los domingos.’
- ¿En qué lengua(s) tu mamá **te habla A TI normalmente**?
- ¿Tú normalmente **le respondes** a tu mamá en totonaco o en español?
- ¿Qué lengua prefieres usar con tu mamá?
- ¿Qué lengua tu mamá quiere que uses con ella?
- ¿Qué lengua(s) tu mamá **te hablaba a ti cuando ERAS PEQUEÑO**?
- Si ha habido algún cambio en la lengua que tu mamá usa contigo ¿**por qué crees que cambió**?

#### **TU PAPÁ** (o quien te cuida como un papá)

- ¿Tu **papá** sabe más de una lengua? SÍ ¿Cuál o cuáles?
- NO habla solo una ¿Cuál es? Si sabe más de una lengua, explica: ¿Cuál lengua crees que **tu papá usa más** en la vida diaria?
- ¿**Con qué personas** tu papá habla **en totonaco** o **con qué personas** habla **en español** u otras lenguas? Da ejemplos específicos, por ejemplo, ‘mi papá siempre habla con sus hijos y nietos en español pero habla con mi abuelo en totonaco’
- ¿Para hacer **qué cosas** tu papá habla **en totonaco** y para hacer **qué cosas** usa la(s) **otra(s) lenguas**? Por ej. ‘mi papá habla en totonaco para ponerse de acuerdo con los vecinos, pero para resolver asuntos con las autoridades, usa el español.’
- ¿Qué lengua(s) tu papá **te habla A TI normalmente**?
- ¿Tú normalmente le respondes a tu papá en totonaco o en español?
- ¿Qué lengua prefieres usar con tu papá?
- ¿Qué lengua tu papá quiere que uses con él?
- ¿Qué lengua(s) tu papá **te hablaba a ti cuando ERAS PEQUEÑO**?
- Si ha habido algún cambio en la lengua que tu papá usa contigo ¿**por qué crees que cambió**?

## **TUS DEMÁS FAMILIARES**

- Vives con hermanos (u otra gente joven) en casa? NO SÍ
- ¿En qué lengua sueles hablar con ellos? ¿Siempre usan la misma lengua o intercambian? Explica abajo para que yo entienda como hacen ustedes.
- ¿Tienes contacto con abuelos, tíos o demás familiares? NO ( ) SÍ ¿En qué lengua sueles hablar con ellos? ¿Usas diferentes lenguas con diferentes familiares? Explica abajo para que yo entienda como hacen ustedes, por ejemplo *‘los padres de mi madre viven con nosotros. Ellos sólo hablan totonaco, así que hablamos totonaco con ellos, aunque usamos español entre nosotros. Los padres de mi padre hablan náhuatl y español, y no sabemos hablar náhuatl, por eso cuando los vemos, siempre hablamos en español’*.

## **TÚ**

- Si tuvieras hijos en el futuro, ¿en que lengua crees que les hablarás? ¿Por qué?
- Piensa ahora en las veces que usas las diferentes lenguas que sabes. Por ejemplo, cuando estas en casa comparando con cuando estás en el colegio o en la calle, ¿hay diferencia? O cuando estás entre amigos comparando con estar entre desconocidos ¿hay diferencia? ¿Crees que tú usas diferentes lenguas en diferentes situaciones? Da ejemplos concretos y explica por qué haces así
- ¿Lees libros o textos en totonaco fuera de la clase de totonaco? Si es así, explica qué tipo de textos lees, dónde los consigues etc. ¿Hay periódicos en totonaco? ¿Cómo son? ¿Los lees? ¿Dónde se consiguen?
- ¿Existen emisoras de radio en totonaco? ¿Cuáles y cómo son los programas? ¿Los escuchas? ¿Has colaborado en programas de radio?
- ¿Hay discos de música en totonaco? ¿Puedes nombrar algún artista que canta en totonaco? ¿Dónde consigue uno esta música?
- ¿Hay programas de televisión o canal de televisión en totonaco? ¿Los ves? ¿Hay anuncios de televisión en totonaco? ¿Cómo son, de qué tratan? ¿qué opinas al respecto de la televisión en totonaco?
- ¿Hay misas en totonaco en tu comunidad? ¿Acudes a ellas o vas a misas en español? ¿Prefieres rezar en totonaco o en español? ¿Sabes decir el Padre Nuestro en totonaco? Explica todas estas cosas aquí

## **PARTE TRES**

### **CONOCIMIENTOS DE LAS LENGUAS DE LA REPUBLICA**

¿Puedes enlistar aquí **todas las lenguas indígenas** que se hablan actualmente en -  
- **el estado de Puebla?**

- **la República Mexicana?**

**En Huehuetla, qué porcentaje** de la población crees que sabe hablar **totonaco?**

Menos del 10%    11-25%    26-50%    51-75%    76% o más

Si sabes el porcentaje exacto, escríbelo aquí \_\_\_\_\_

**En todo el estado de Puebla**, enlistas los otros lugares donde hay gentes **que habla totonaco o un variante de totonaco**

**En todo el estado de Puebla, ¿qué porcentaje de la población** crees que habla totonaco o un variante de totonaco?

Menos del 10%    11-25%    26-50%    51-75%    76% o más)

Si sabes el porcentaje exacto, escríbelo aquí \_\_\_\_\_

### **OPINIONES TUYAS**

¿Qué pasa actualmente cuando la policía trata con una persona que habla totonaco pero no sabe español?

En tu opinión ¿un hablante de totonaco debería tener derecho a demandar que la policía le hable en totonaco, o que la policía se ocupe de proveer intérprete? *Elija sólo una opción*

- A Sí debería tener derecho, pero sólo en las comunidades donde más se habla totonaco
- B Sí debería tener derecho en todo el estado de Puebla
- C Sí debería tener derecho en toda la República Mexicana
- D No, porque todos los ciudadanos deberían hablar español
- E Tengo otra opinión – aquí explico ...

(Qué pasa actualmente cuando los servicios médicos públicos tratan con una persona que habla totonaco pero no sabe español?

En tu opinión ¿un hablante de totonaco debería tener derecho a demandar atención médica en totonaco, o que los servicios médicos se ocupen de proveer intérprete? *Elija sólo una opción*

- A Sí debería tener derecho, pero sólo en las comunidades donde más se habla totonaco
- B Sí debería tener derecho en todo el estado de Puebla
- C Sí debería tener derecho en toda la República Mexicana
- D No, porque todos los ciudadanos deberían hablar español
- E Tengo otra opinión – aquí explico ...

¿Qué oferta hay actualmente para recibir una educación en la lengua *totonaca*?

En tu opinión, ¿las comunidades que hablan totonaco deberían tener derecho a demandar que sus maestros hablen totonaco y que las escuelas den las clases en la lengua *totonaca*? *Elija sólo una opción*

- A Sí, deberían tener derecho, siempre que los alumnos aprendan a hablar español también
- B Sí, deberían tener derecho, pero mejor algunas materias en totonaco, y otras en español
- D No, porque los alumnos acabarían la escuela sin hablar bien el español
- C No, esto dividiría el país, todas las escuelas mexicanas deberían usar sólo español
- E Tengo otra opinión – aquí explico ...

En tu opinión, ¿hasta qué nivel es adecuado ofrecer la educación en la lengua *totonaca*?

*Puedes marcar todas las opciones que quieras – no hace falta elegir sólo una*

- A Ningún nivel, uno debe estudiar en la lengua española
- B nivel pre-escolar
- B nivel primaria
- C nivel secundaria
- D nivel bachillerato
- E nivel universitario
- F nivel postgrado
- G otra opción – aquí explico ...

En tu opinión ¿sería correcto que LOS HABLANTES DE ESPAÑOL que viven en comunidades donde se habla totonaco, fueran obligados a aprender totonaco en la escuela? *Puedes marcar todas las opciones que quieras*

- A Sí, porque es la lengua originaria de la comunidad donde viven



- B Sí, para que puedan comunicarse mejor con sus vecinos y paisanos  
 C Sí, para que cambien sus actitudes hacia la lengua totonaca  
 D No, porque no les va a servir  
 E No, porque no dan valor a las lenguas indígenas  
 F No, porque no se debe obligar, se debe escoger libremente  
 G otra opinión – aquí explico ...

Tú has dado aquí tus opiniones, ahora ¿crees que la mayoría de la gente piensa igual que tú? Explica aquí

**OPINIONES DE OTROS** *¿Qué opinas sobre las siguientes cosas que dice la gente?*

*“Hay que parar la pérdida del totonaco. Es una lengua originaria del país, se hablaba aquí siglos antes del español, el totonaco debería tener el mismo estatus, valor y uso como el español”*

**Totalmente de acuerdo      Algo de acuerdo      Nada de acuerdo**

**Explica tu opinión**

*“El totonaco ya es una lengua del pasado y de los tiempos difíciles, si lo estamos perdiendo es porque estamos progresando como país moderno, y esto no es de lamentar”*

**Totalmente de acuerdo      Algo de acuerdo      Nada de acuerdo**

**Explica tu opinión**

*“Está bien conservar el totonaco, pero ellos tienen que hacer mayor esfuerzo en hablar español si quieren tener los mismos derechos que nosotros”*

**Totalmente de acuerdo      Algo de acuerdo      Nada de acuerdo**

**Explica tu opinión**

*“Todos somos mexicanos y debemos ayudar a que los indígenas aprendan español para integrarse”*

**Totalmente de acuerdo      Algo de acuerdo      Nada de acuerdo**

**Explica tu opinión ...**

*“Soy hablante de totonaco, pero a mis hijos les hablo en español. Quiero que tengan las oportunidades que yo nunca tuve, y para que eviten los problemas...”*

**Totalmente de acuerdo      Algo de acuerdo      Nada de acuerdo**

**Explica tu opinión ...**

*“Si otras lenguas pueden adaptarse a las nuevas tecnologías y formas de comunicación, el totonaco puede también. ¡Claro que el totonaco sirve para la tecnología y la internet y en los negocios! No veo inconveniente”*

**Totalmente de acuerdo      Algo de acuerdo      Nada de acuerdo**

**Explica tu opinión**

**PARTE FINAL** ¿Tienes algún comentario más sobre el totonaco o el uso de lenguas indígenas en la República Mexicana? ¿Tienes algún comentario sobre la naturaleza de las preguntas de este cuestionario?

*Gracias por dedicar tu tiempo y esfuerzo a colaborar con este estudio. Su aportación es única y valiosa, contribuye a la investigación académica y la recopilación de datos reales sobre la actual situación sociolingüística en Huehuetla. Si quieres colaborar más (por ejemplo como cooperante de la investigación, házmelo saber*

### **Appendix 3 UIEP Questionnaire**

Appendix 2 contains those questions which differ from Appendix 1 questions

- En el último censo del 2010, hicieron la siguiente pregunta sobre auto-descripción étnica:  
“De acuerdo con tu cultura, ¿te consideras indígena?”  
¿Tú qué respuesta darías a esa pregunta del censo?
- ¿Algún comentario sobre la naturaleza de esa pregunta del censo o sobre las descripciones étnicas?

#### **TU ENTORNO LINGÜÍSTICO GENERAL**

**Si tuvieras que representar numéricamente el uso que TÚ HACES de las lenguas, cómo lo pondrías?**

*Aquí un ejemplo; no lo copies, sino úsalo para reflexionar cómo haces uso de las lenguas en diferentes entornos y escribe la proporción real, en tu caso, en el siguiente apartado*

	<i>Lengua Originaria</i>	<i>Español</i>
<i>en casa</i>	80%	20% (80-20)
<i>en mi comunidad</i>	75%	25% (75-25)
<i>en las veredas a mi casa</i>	100%	0% (100-0)
<i>en el camión a la UIEP</i>	10%	90% (10-90)
<i>con los maestros de la UIEP</i>	1%	99% (1-99)
<i>entre amigos de la UIEP</i>	50%	50% (50-50)
<i>en la iglesia</i>	90%	10% (90-10)

**Tus datos - pon aquí los números que representan TU USO de las lenguas en diferentes entornos**

	<b>lengua Originaria</b>	<b>Español</b>
en casa	.....%	.....%
en las veredas a mi casa	%	%
con mis vecinos	%	%
con los niños de mi comunidad	%	%
en las calles del centro	%	%
con jóvenes en el parque	%	%
en el mercado los domingos	%	%
en el camión a la UIEP	%	%
con los maestros de la UIEP	%	%
entre amigos de la UIEP	%	%
en la iglesia	%	%
cantando	%	%
rezando	%	%
chateando en internet	%	%
escribiendo en Facebook	%	%
hablando en celular	%	%
mandando textos en celular	%	%
escribiendo ensayos académicos	%	%
¿Alguna categoría falta? _____	%	%

Ahora explica el reparto que has hecho arriba, y pon en tus palabras cuándo haces más o menos uso de las lenguas originarias, y por qué, con qué personas, haciendo qué cosas, en qué lugares, etc

## Bibliography

Abley, M., 2003. *Spoken Here: travels among threatened languages*. London: William Heinemann.

Academia Mexicana de la Lengua, n.d. *Esbozo histórico de la Academia Mexicana de la Lengua*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.academia.org.mx/inicio/historia>  
[Accessed 13 6 2015].

Ager, D., 2001. *Motivation in Language Planning and Language Policy*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Aguirre Beltrán, G., 1946. *La población negra de México*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

AIATSIS (The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders), 2015. *Guidelines for the ethical publishing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and research from those communities*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

Altieri, M. A. & Toledo, V. M., 2011. The agroecological revolution in Latin America: rescuing nature, ensuring food sovereignty and empowering peasants. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38(3), pp. 587-612.

Anaya, G., 1987. Lenguas de México: Su clasificación. *Revista Mexico Indígena*, Volume 17, pp. 3-7.

Anderson, B. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 2nd ed. London: Verso.

Asher, R. E. & Moseley, C., 2007. *Atlas of World Languages*. Second ed. London: Routledge.

Avruch, K., 1998. *Culture and Conflict Resolution*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Azurmendi, M., Bachoc, E. & Zabaleta, F., 2001. Reversing Language Shift: The Case of Basque. In: *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved? : Reversing Language Shift, Revisited : A 21st Century Perspective*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, pp. 234-259.

Bartolomé, M. A., 2006. *Gente de Costumbre y Gente de Razón: Las Identidades Étnicas en México*. 3rd ed. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores/Instituto Nacional Indigenista.

Bazant, J., 1991. From Independence to the Liberal Republic, 1821-1867. In: *Mexico since Independence*. Cambridge: CUP, pp. 1-48.

Beck, D., 2003. Person-hierarchies and the origin of asymmetries in Totonac verbal paradigms. *Lingüística Atlántica*, Volume 23, p. 35 – 68.

Beck, D. & Mel'čuk, I., 2011. Morphological phrasemes and Totonacan verbal morphology. *Linguistics*, 49(1), p. 175–228.

- Betancourt, I. G., 1983. Dialecto: Una nocion linguistica desafortunada. In: N. Rodriguez, E. Masferrer Kan & R. Vargas Vega, eds. *Educacion, Etnias y Descolonizacion en America Latina: una guía para la educación bilingüe intercultural*. Mexico City: UNESCO, pp. 389-399.
- Blommaert, J., Leppänen, S. & Spotti, M., 2012. Endangering Multilingualism. In: J. Blommaert, S. Leppänen, P. Pahta & T. Räisänen, eds. *Dangerous multilingualism: Northern Perspectives on Order, Purity and Normality*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-24.
- Bonfil Batalla, G., 1983. Lo propio y lo ajeno: una aproximacion al problema del control cultural'. In: *Educacion, Etnias y Descolonizacion en America Latina: una guía para la educación bilingüe intercultural* . Mexico City: UNESCO, pp. 249-256.
- Bonfil Batalla, G., 1987. *El México Profundo, una civilización negada*. Mexico City: Editorial Grijalbo.
- Bourdieu, P., 1991. Language and Symbolic Power. In: Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Brown, Cecil H.; Beck, David; Kondrak, Grzegorz; Watters, James K.; Wichmann, Soren; 2011. Totozoquean. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 77(3), pp. 323-372.
- Burman, A., 2014. 'Now we are Indígenas': Hegemony and Indigeneity in the Bolivian Andes. *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 9(3), pp. 247-271.
- Butler, J., 1997. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York: Routledge.
- Cameron, D., 2005. Communication and Commodification: Global Economic Change in Sociolinguistic Perspective. In: *Language, Communication and the Economy*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 9-23.
- Cameron, D., 2008. Language endangerment and verbal hygiene: History, morality and politics. In: A. Duchene & M. Heller, eds. *Discourses of Endangerment: Ideology and Interest In the Defence of Languages*. London: Continuum, pp. 268-285.
- Campbel, L. & Mithun, M., 1979. Introduction . In: L. Campbel & Mithun, eds. *The native languages of America* . Austin, TX: University of Texas.
- Canessa, A., 2012. Gender, Indigeneity, and the Performance of Authenticity in Latin American Tourism. *Latin American Perspectives*, 39 (6)(187), pp. 109-115.
- Castree, N., Kitchin, R. & Rogers, A., 2013. Symbolic Violence. In: *A Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford: OUP.
- Centro Penitenciario Indígena de Asesoría, D. y. T. , n.d. *Cpiade*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.cdi.gob.mx/cepiadet/colaboraciones.html> [Accessed 3 January 2015].
- Chenaut, V., 1996. *Procesos rurales e historia regional (sierra y costa totonacas de Veracruz)*. Mexico, DF: CIESAS.

- Chia, R. & MacKay, B., 2007. Post-processual challenges for the emerging strategy-as-practice perspective: Discovering strategy in the logic of practice. *Human Relations*, 60(1), pp. 217-242.
- Chimbutane, F., 2011. *Rethinking Bilingual Education in Postcolonial Contexts*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Cifuentes, B., 1992. Language policy in Mexico. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Volume 96, pp. 9-17.
- Cifuentes, B. & Moctezuma, J. L., 2006. The Mexican indigenous languages and the national censuses: 1970-2000. In: *Mexican Indigenous Languages at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century*. Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 191-248.
- Comisión de Derechos Indígenas (CDI) Available at: <http://www.gob.mx/cdi> [Accessed 3 January 2015].
- Croda León, R., 2005. *Entre los hombres y las deidades: las danzas del Totonacapan*. Mexico City: CONACULTA/Dirección General de Culturas Populares e Indígenas.
- Cru, J., 2015. Language revitalisation from the ground up: promoting Yucatec Maya on Facebook. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 36(3), pp. 284-296.
- De la Torre Villar, E., 2010. El virreinato de Nueva España en el siglo XVIII. *Historia de México*, p. 137.
- de Sousa Santos, B., 2010. *Descolonizar el saber, Reinventar el poder*. Montevideo, Uruguay: Ediciones Tricle.
- Del Amo Rodriguez, S. & Moctezuma Perez, S., 2008. Bienestar o calidad de vida en una comunidad de la sierra. *IBEROFORUM Revista de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad Iberoamericana*, Año III(5 (enero-junio)), pp. 1-18.
- Democracia Indigena*. 1999. [Film] Directed by Bruce 'Pacho' Lane
- DGEI, 2013. *Breve Historia de la DGEI*. [Online] Available at: <http://basica.sep.gob.mx/dgei/> [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> February 2013].
- Dorian, N., 1977. The problem of the semi-speaker in language death. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Volume 12, pp. 23-32.
- Dorian, N. C., 1989. *Investigating Obsolescence. Studies in Language Contraction and Death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dorneyi, Z. C. & Kata Nemeth, N., 2006. *Motivation, Language Attitudes and Globalisation : A Hungarian Perspective*. Clevedon, GBR: Multilingual Matters.
- Ellison, N., 2005. Les enjeux locaux de la « reconstitution des peuples indiens » au Mexique. Reconfiguration des rapports entre minorités et pouvoirs publics : le cas totonaque. *Cahiers des Ameriques Latines*, Issue 50, pp. 127-145.
- Ellison, N., 2007a. Cambios agroecológicos y percepción ambiental en la región Totonaca de Huehuetla, Puebla. *Nuevo mundo - Mundos Nuevos*.

Ellison, N., 2007b. *Les Totonagues aujourd'hui, entre crise du développement et nouvelles revendications*. [Online] Available at: <http://nuevomundo.revues.org/3287> [Accessed 23 Sep 2012].

Escobar, A. M., 2013. Bilingualism in Latin America. In: *The handbook of bilingualism and multilingualism*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK ; Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 725-744.

Faudree, P. & H. M., 2014. Language, society, and history: towards a unified approach?. In: N. Enfield, P. Kockelman & J. Sidnell, eds. *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 227-249.

Ferguson, C., 1959. Diglossia. *Word*, 15(2), p. 325-340.

Fishman, J., 1991. *Reversing Language Shift. Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Fishman, J. A., 1972. Domains and the relationship between micro- and macrosociolinguistics. In: *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, p. 435-453.

Fishman, J., Gertner, M. H. & Lowy, E. G., 1985. *The rise and fall of the ethnic revival: perspectives on language and ethnicity*. Berlin; New York: Mouton Publishers.

Flores Farfan, J. A., 2011a. Keeping the fire alive: a decade of language revitalization in Mexico. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, pp. 189-209.

Flores Farfan, J. A., 2011a. Keeping the fire alive: a decade of language revitalization in Mexico. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, pp. 189-209

Flores Farfán, J. & Holzschleiter, A., 2011b. The Power of Discourse and the Discourse of Power. In: R. Wodak & B. & K. P. Johnstone, eds. *The Sage Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. London: Sage, pp. 139-152.

Flores Farfán, J. 2006. Who studies whom and who benefits from sociolinguistic research? *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. 27(1) 79-86.

Foucault, M., 1982. The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8, 777-795.

Fought, C., 2006a. *Language and Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Freeland, J., 2003. Intercultural-Bilingual Education for an Interethnic-Plurilingual Society? The Case of Nicaragua's Caribbean Coast. *Comparative Education*, 39(2), pp. 239-260.

Freeland, J., 2013. Linguistic revitalization: social stakes and new research directions: an afterword. *Langage & Société*, 145(3), pp. 81-100.



- Freire, P., 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- García Canclini, N., 1995. *Consumidores y ciudadanos: conflictos multiculturales de la globalización*. Mexico City: Grijalbo.
- García Martínez, A., 2014. *Cultura e identidad indígena en Veracruz: juventudes en el Totonacapan en el siglo XXI*. s/l: IVEC Instituto Veracruzano de la Cultura.
- García, O., 2009. *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- García, O., 2009a. Bilingualism and Translanguaging. In: *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 42-72.
- García, Ofelia; Wei, Li (2013) 'Language, Linguaging and Bilingualism' in *Translanguaging: language, bilingualism and education*, pp 5-18. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke
- García, O., Skutnabb-Kangas, T. & Torres-Guzmán, M., 2006. Weaving Spaces and (De)constructing Ways for Multilingual Schools: The Actual and the Imagined. In: *Imagining Multilingual Schools : Languages in Education*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, pp. 3-47.
- Gee, J. P., n.d. Literacy and the Literacy Myth: From Plato to Freire. In: *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*. 2nd ed. s.l.:Routledge/Falmer, pp. 22-45.
- Goertzen, C., 2010. *Made in Mexico: Tradition, Tourism, and Political Ferment in Oaxaca*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Gonzalez Casanova, P., 1965. Internal Colonialism and National Development. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 1(4), p. 27–37.
- Govers, C., 2006. *Performing the Community : Representation, Ritual and Reciprocity in the Totonac Highlands of Mexico*. Berlin: Lit Verlag.
- Greathouse - Amador, L., 2005. Tourism and Policy in Preserving Minority Languages and Culture: the Cuetzalan Experience. *Review of Policy Research*, 22(1), pp. 49-58.
- Grinevald, C., 2008. Endangered Languages of Mexico and Central America. In: M. Brenzinger, ed. *Language Diversity Endangered*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, pp. 59-86.
- Grinevald, C. & Bert, M., 2011. Speakers and communities. In: *The Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 45-65.
- Gross, T., 2011. Divided over Tourism: Zapotec Responses to Mexico's 'Magical Villages Program'. *Anthropological Notebooks*, 17(3), pp. 51-71.
- Gudynas, E., 2011. Buen Vivir: Today's tomorrow. *Development*, 54(4), pp. 441-447.

- Hamers, J. & Blanc, M. H., 2000. *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*. Second ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harré, R. & Van Langenhove, L., 1991. Varieties of Positioning. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 21(4), pp. 393-407.
- Harrison, D. K., 2007. *When Languages Die: The Extinction of the World's Languages and the Erosion of Human Knowledge*. Oxford: OUP.
- Hartog, G., Greathouse-Amador, L. & García Pérez, J. G., 2005. *Matices sociales del color de la piel en México: Claroscuro sobre una realidad oculta*. Puebla: BUAP.
- Haugen, E., 2006 [1971]. The Ecology of Language. In: A. Fill & P. Mühlhäusle, eds. *Ecolinguistics Reader: Language, Ecology and Environment*. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 57-66.
- Heiss, A., 2007. Indigenous Book Publishing. In: *Making Books: Contemporary Australian Publishing*. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, pp. 255-259.
- Heller, M., 2010. The Commodification of Language. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Volume 39, pp. 101-114.
- Herrera Zendejas, E., 2009. *Formas Sonoras: mapa fónico de las lenguas mexicanas*. México, D.F.: El Colegio de México, A.C.
- Hidalgo, M., 1994. Bilingual education, nationalism and ethnicity in Mexico. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, Volume 18, pp. 185-208.
- Hidalgo, M., 2006b. Determinants in the Survival of Mexican Indigenous Languages. In: *Mexican Indigenous Languages at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 87-126.
- Hidalgo, M. G., 2006. *Contributions to the Sociology of Language : Mexican Indigenous Languages at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Hill, J. H. & Hill, K. C., 1986. *Speaking Mexicano: dynamics of a syncretic language in central Mexico*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Hill, J. & Hill, K., 1977. Language Death and Relexification in Tlaxcalan Nahuatl. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Volume 12, pp. 55-69.
- Hoey, M., 1979. *Signalling in discourse*. Birmingham: Birmingham University: ELR Monographs no.6.
- Hoey, M., 2001. *Textual Interaction*. London: Routledge.
- Hoobler, E., 2006. 'To Take Their Heritage in Their Hands': Indigenous Self-Representation and Decolonisation in the Community Museums of Oaxaca, Mexico. *The American Indian Quarterly*, pp. 441-460.
- Hornberger, N. H., 1999. Maintaining and Revitalising Indigenous Languages in Latin America: State Planning vs. Grassroots Initiatives. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 2(3), pp. 159-165.



- Howard, R., 2009. Education reform, indigenous politics and decolonisation in the Bolivia of Evo Morales. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29(6), pp. 583-593.
- Howard, R., 2010. Language, Signs, and the Performance of Power: The Discursive Struggle over Decolonisation in the Bolivia of Evo Morales. *Latin American Perspectives*, 37(3), pp. 176-194.
- Huehuetla, Municipio de, 2008. *Plan de Desarrollo Municipal 2008-2011*, Huehuetla, Puebla, Mexico: Municipio de Huehuetla.
- Huss, L. & Lindgren, A., 2011. Introduction: defining language emancipation. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Volume 209, pp. 1-15.
- INALI (Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas), 2008. *Catálogo de las lenguas indígenas nacionales: Variantes Lingüísticas de México con sus autodenominaciones*. 14 January 2008 ed. México, DF: INALI/CONACULTA.
- INEGI, 2004. *La Población Hablante de Lengua Indígena de Puebla. Informe del Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática*, Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática.
- INEGI, 2011. *Panorama sociodemográfico de Puebla. Tomo I*, Mexico City: INEGI
- INEGI, 2011b. *Panorama sociodemográfico de Puebla. Tomo II*, Mexico City: INEGI.
- INEGI, 2011c. *Principales Resultados: Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010*, Mexico City: INEGI.
- IWGIA, 2001. Mexico. In: *The Indigenous World*. Copenhagen: IWGIA, pp. 72-82.
- Jaffe, A., 2012. *Stance: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Oxford: OUP.
- Kamwangamalu, N. M., 2008. Language policy, vernacular education and language economics in postcolonial Africa . In: *Language As Commodity : Global Structures, Local Marketplaces*. s.l.:Continuum International, p. 171 – 186.
- Katz, F., 1991. The Liberal Republic and the Porfiriato, 1867-1910. In: *Mexico since Independence*. Cambridge: CUP, pp. 49-124.
- Kima, P., Miranda, T. & Olaciregui, C., 2008. Pocket School: Exploring mobile technology as a sustainable literacy education option for underserved indigenous children in Latin America. *International Journal of Educational Development*, Volume 28, p. 435–445.
- Knight, A., 1991. The Rise and Fall of Cardenismo. In: *Mexico since Independence*. Cambridge: CUP, pp. 241-320.
- Kollewe, C., 2005. 'To save our culture': Community Museums and Local Discourses on the Loss of Customs in Southern Mexico. In: *Perspectives on endangerment*. Hildesheim; New York: Georg Olms, pp. 185-196.

- Kouega, J.-P., 2008. Minority language use in Cameroon and educated indigenes' attitude to their languages. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Volume 189, pp. 85-113.
- Krashen, S., 1982. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Krickeberg, W. O., 1964 (1933). *Las antiguas culturas mexicanas*. Mexico, D.F: Fondo de Cultura Economica/Seccion de Obras de Antropologi.
- Krug, E. G. et al., 2002. *World Report on Violence and Health*, Geneva: Word Health Organisation.
- Lam, Y., 2009. The straw that broke the language's back: language shift in the Upper Necaxa valley of Mexico. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Volume 195 (Small languages and small language communities), p. 219–233.
- Landweer, M. L., 2012. Methods of language endangerment research: a perspective from Melanesia. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Volume 214, p. 153 – 178.
- Lastra, Y., 1992. The present-day indigenous languages of Mexico: an overview. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Volume 96, pp. 35-43.
- León-Portilla, M., 2004. Lengua y cultura Náhuas. *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, 20(2), pp. 221-230.
- Levy, P. & Beck, D., 2012. *Las lenguas totonacas y tepehuas: Textos y otros materiales para sus estudios*. México, DF: UNAM.
- Lewis, M. P., 2009. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 16<sup>th</sup> ed. Dallas, Texas: SIL International.
- Ligorred, F., 1992. *Lenguas Indígenas de México y Centroamérica*. Madrid: Editoriales MAPFRE.
- Logan, M., 1984. Film Review: The Tree of Life 1978; the Tree of Knowledge 1983. *American Anthropologist*, March, 86(1), pp. 235-237.
- López, Caballero, P. (2009) The effect of 'othering': the historical dialectic of local and national identity among the 'originarios', 1950-2000. *Anthropological Theory*, 9(2) , 171-187
- Macías, E., 2013. *Speech to the First CPIADE National Conference of Interpreters and Translators of Languages other than Spanish, held in Oaxaca; reported 25/10/13 by Eugenio Zamorano in <http://www.diariodemexicousa.com/indigenas-presos-no-hablan-espanol/>*. Report : s.n.
- MacKay, C., 1999. *A Grammar of Misantra Totonac*. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press.
- Mackay, C. J., 2012. Bibliografía de las lenguas totonacas y tepehuas. In: *Las lenguas totonacas y tepehuas: Textos y otros materiales para sus estudios*. Mexico, DF: UNAM, pp. 545-588.

- Makoni, S. & Pennycook, A., 2006. Disinventing and Reconstituting Languages. In: S. Makoni & A. Pennycook, eds. *Disinventing and Reconstituting Languages*. Clevedon: Channel View Publications, pp. 1-41.
- Mallon, F., 1995. *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Marlett, S. A., 2006. La situación sociolingüística de la lengua seri en 2006. In: *Situaciones sociolingüísticas de lenguas amerindias*. Lima: SIL International y Universidad Ricardo Palma, pp. 1-6.
- Marlett, S. A., 2007c. *Bringing it home: the implications of documentation for a vibrant endangered language*. London, SOAS, pp. 157-163.
- Mar-Molinero, C., 2000. *The Politics of Language in the Spanish-Speaking World*. London: Routledge.
- Martí, F. et al., 2005. *Words and Worlds: World Languages Review*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd/UNESCO ETXEA.
- Masferrer Kan, E., 2004. *Totonacos*. Mexico City: Colegio de México/Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas.
- Masferrer Kan, E., 2009. *Los Dueños del Tiempo: los Tutunakús de la Sierra Norte de Puebla*. México, DF: Fundación Juan Rulfo.
- Masferrer Kan, E., Bravo Marentes, C., Morales Carranza, H. & Garma Navarro, C., 1984. Co-parenthood among the Totonacos of the Sierra region of Puebla. *América Indígena*, 44(2), pp. 375-403.
- May, S. & Aikman, S., 2003. Indigenous Education: addressing current issues and developments. *Comparative Education*, 39(2), p. 139–145.
- McCarty, T. L., 1998. Schooling, resistance, and American Indian languages. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 132(1), pp. 27-41.
- McCarty, T. L., 2002. Bilingual/bicultural schooling and indigenous students: a response to Eugene Garcia. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Volume 155/156, pp. 161-174.
- McCarty, T. L. et al., 2005. Editors' Introduction: Indigenous Epistemologies and Education-Self-Determination, Anthropology, and Human Rights. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Volume 36, pp. 1-7.
- McCarty, T. L. & Roessel, C., 2015. Tsé Ch'ízhí Diné Bi'ólta'—Rough Rock, The People's School: Reflections on a Half-Century of Navajo Community-Controlled Education (U.S. 1966). In: *Pedagogies and Curriculum to (Re)imagine Public Education*, Philadelphia: Springer, pp. 49-63.
- McQuown, N. A., 1968. Obituary: Morris Swadesh. *American Anthropologist*, Issue 70, pp. 755-756.
- McQuown, N. A., 1990a. *Gramática de la lengua totonaca (Coatepec, Sierra Norte de Puebla)*. México, DF: Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas, UNAM.

- Mendoza Zuany, R. G., 2009. Building hybrid knowledge at the Intercultural University of Veracruz, Mexico: an anthropological study of indigenous contexts. *Intercultural Education*, 20(3), pp. 211-218.
- Messing, J., 2005. *Towards a Conceptualisation of an Indigenous/ Post-Colonial Bilingualism: Examples from Central Mexico*. Somerville MA, USA, Cascadilla Press, pp. 1597-1601.
- Messing, J., 2007. Multiple ideologies and competing discourses: Language shift in Tlaxcala, Mexico. *Language in Society*, Volume 36, pp. 555-577.
- Milroy, L., 1987. *Language and Social Networks*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Milroy, L., 2002. Social Networks. In: *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 549-572.
- Mintzberg, H., 2007. *Tracking strategies: toward a general theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [electronic book].
- Morales Lara, S., 2008. Estudios lingüísticos del Totonacapan. *Anales de Antropología*, Volume 42, pp. 201-225.
- Mora, M., 2003. The Imagination to Listen: Reflections on a Decade of Zapatista Struggle. *Social Justice*, 30(3), pp. 17-31.
- Moseley, C., 2010. *UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*,. Third ed. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Motsaathebe, G., 2011. Book Publishing In Indigenous Languages In South Africa: Challenges And Opportunities. *African Journals Online* , 10(1), pp. 115-127.
- Mufwene, S. S., 2005. Globalisation and the myth of killer languages: what's really going on?. In: G. Huggan & S. Klasen, eds. *Perspectives on endangerment*. Hildesheim; New York : Georg Olms, pp. 19-48.
- Muñoz, M. L. O., 2010. *Stand Up and Fight: Participatory Indigenismo, Populism, and Mobilisation in Mexico, 1970–1984*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Myers-Scotton, 1993. *Social Motivations for Code Switching: Evidence from Africa*. Oxford: OUP.
- Ndlangamandla, S. C., 2010. (Unofficial) Multilingualism in desegregated schools: Learners' use of and views towards African languages. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 28((1), p. 61–73.
- Ng, S. H., 2007. Language-based discrimination: blatant and subtle forms. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 26(2), pp. 106-122.
- Nichols, J., 1997. Modeling Ancient Population Structures And Movement In Linguistics. *Academic Search Complete. Web*,. 26(1), pp. 359-.
- Norbert, F. & Reyhner, J., 2002. *Language and Literacy Teaching for Indigenous Education: A Bilingual Approach*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

- Novak-Lukanovič, S., 2008. *Language and economy*, Ljubljana, Slovenia: IES (Institute for Ethnic Studies).
- Ogulnick, K., 2006. Popular Education and Language Rights in Indigenous Mayan Communities: Emergence of New Social Actors and Gendered Voices. In: *Imagining Multilingual Schools : Language in Education and Globalisation*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, pp. 150-169.
- Oliart, P., 2011. *Mediocridad y corrupción: los enemigos de la educación pública en el Perú*. Lima: PUCP.
- Parodi, C., 2006. The Indianization of Spaniards in New Spain. In: *Mexican Indigenous Languages at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century*. Mouton de Gruyter: Berlin, pp. 29-52.
- Patiño Espino, R., 2008. *Strong cooperativeness and family reproductive ecology : an overview of the communitarian life among Totonacas from Mexico*. Liverpool: Univerity of Liverpool PhD Thesis.
- Patrick, D., 2008. Indigenous language endangerment and the unfinished business of nation states . In: A. Duchene & M. Heller, eds. *Discourses of Endangerment: Ideology and Interest In the Defence of Languages*. London: Continuum, pp. 35-56.
- Pellicer, D., Cifuentes, B. & Herrera, C., 2006. Legislating Diversity in Twenty-First Century Mexico. In: *Mexican Indigenous Languages at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 127-166.
- Pérez-Aguilera, D. A. & Figueroa-Helland, L. E., 2011. Beyond Acculturation: Political 'Change', Indigenous Knowledges, and Intercultural Higher-Education in Mexico. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 9(2), pp. 268-296.
- Pitarch, P., 1998. Zapatistas. De la revolucion a la politica de la identidad. *America Latina Hoy*, Volume 19, pp. 5-11.
- Prem, H. J., 1992 . Spanish colonisation and Indian Property in Central Mexico, 1521-1620. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers [ special edition] The Americas before and after 1492: current geographical research*, 82(3), pp. 444-459.
- Preston, D. R., 1999. Introduction. In: *Handbook of Perceptual Dialectology: Volume I*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: J. Benjamins.
- Rice, K., 2014. Endangered Languages. In: *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 285-308.
- Ricento, T., 2014. Thinking about language: what political theorists need to know about language in the real world; in *Language Policy*, 13, 351-369
- Ricento, T., 2009. Theoretical Perspectives in Language Policy: An Overview. In: T. Ricento, ed. *Introduction to Language Policy : Theory and Method*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 3-9
- Ricento, T. (ed), 2009. *Introduction to Language Policy : Theory and Method*. Oxford: Blackwell

- Romaine, S., 2008. Linguistic Diversity, Sustainability, and the Future of the Past. In: K. A. King, et al. eds. *Sustaining Linguistic Diversity : Endangered and Minority Languages and Language Varieties*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, pp. 7-22.
- Romaine, S., 2013. The Bilingual and Multilingual Community. In: *The handbook of bilingualism and multilingualism*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK ; Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 445-465.
- Saldívar, E. & Walsh, C., 2014. Racial and Ethnic Identities in Mexican Statistics. *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 20(3), pp. 455-475.
- Schavelzon, S., 2015. *Plurinacionalidad y Vivir Bien/Buen Vivir: Dos conceptos leídos desde Bolivia y Ecuador post-constituyentes*. Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala.
- Schmal, J. P., 2004. *The History of Veracruz*. Houston: Houston Institute for Culture.
- SEDESOL, 2012. *Evaluacion de la politica social*, s.l.: <https://www.coneval.org.mx/Evaluacion/Paginas/InformeEvaluacion.aspx>.
- SilverMoon & Ennis, M., 2008. The view of the Empire from the Altepétl: Nahua Historical and Global Imagination. In: *Re-reading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Differences in the Renaissance Empires*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 150-166.
- Skutnabb-Kangas , T. & Dunbar, R., 2010. *Indigenous Children's Education as Linguistic Genocide and a Crime Against Humanity? A Global View*. Guovdageaidnu/ Kautokeino: Gáldu - Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T., 1988. Multilingualism and the education of minority children. In: J. Cummins & T. Skutnabb-Kangas, eds. *Minority education : from shame to struggle*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T., 2012. Indigenousness, human rights, ethnicity, language and power. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, Volume 213, p. 87 – 104.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. & McCarty, T., 2008. Key Concepts in Bilingual Education: Ideological, Historical, Epistemological, and Empirical Foundations. In: J. Cummins & N. H. Hornberger, eds. *Bilingual Education [Volume 5 of Encyclopedia of Language and Education, ed. Jim Cummins and David Corson]*. New York: Springer, pp. 3-17.
- Smith, W. D., 2004. Markets, States, Soil and Self-Determination in Totonacapan. *Critique of Anthropology*, 24(4), pp. 403-429.
- Spencer-Oatey, H., 2012. *What is culture? A compilation of quotations. GlobalPAD Core Concepts*. s.l.:s.n.
- Spolsky, B., 2009. *Language Management*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press



- Stresser-Péan, G., 2009. *The Sun God and the Savior: The Christianization of the Nahua and Totonac in the Sierra Norte de Puebla, Mexico*. Boulder, Colorado: The University Press of Colorado.
- Strubell, M., 2001. Catalan a decade later. In: *Can Threatened Languages be Saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited : A 21st Century Perspective*. London: Multilingual Matters, pp. 260-283.
- Sultana, S., Dovchin, S. & Pennycook, A., 2015. Transglossic language practices of young adults in Bangladesh and Mongolia. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 12(1), pp. 93-108.
- Swadesh, M., 1970. *Un mapa del monolingüismo y el bilingüismo de los indígenas de México en 1960*. Mexico, DF: UNAM.
- Terborg, R., García Landa, L. & Moore, P., 2007. The language Situation in Mexico. In: *Language Planning & Policy. Latin America Vol. 1: Ecuador, Mexico and Paraguay*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, pp. 115-217.
- Thapar-Bjorkert, S., 2009. Pluralities of violence [definition]. In: I. McLean & A. McMillan, eds. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*. Oxford: OUP, p.
- The Warriors of the Sun: the rebirth of the 'voladores' ritual*. 2006. [Film] Directed by Bruce Pachó Lane. US: s.n.
- Thornbury, S., 2005. *Beyond the Sentence: Introducing Discourse Analysis*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Macmillan.
- Tollefson, J. W., 2006. Critical theory in language policy. In: T. Ricento, ed. *Introduction to Language Policy: theory and method*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 42-59.
- Tonkin, E. & Whitehouse, H., 1995. Memory and Social Transmission. *Anthropology Today*, 11(5), pp. 23-24.
- Troiani, D., 2004. *Aperçu grammatical du totonaque de Huehuetla, Puebla, Mexique*. Munchen: LINCOM.
- Un voto vale mas que mi palabras: identidad étnica y cambio político en Huehuetla, Puebla*,. 1998. [Film] Directed by Jaume Vall Verdú. Mexico: s.n.
- Valderrama Rouy, P., 2005. The Totonac. In: A. R. Sandstrom & E. H. García Valencia, eds. *Native peoples of the Gulf Coast of Mexico*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, pp. (Chapter 9) 187-.
- Valdovinos, M., 2015. From policies to practice: the complex role of social mediators in Nayeri public education (Nayarit, Mexico) . In: *Policy and planning for endangered languages*. Cambridge: CUP, pp. 80-92.
- Vallverdu, J. & Wahrhaftig, A. L., 2003. One Vote Is Worth More Than a Thousand Words: Ethnic Identity and Political Change in Huehuetla, Puebla. *Wicazo Sa Review*, Autumn, 18(2), pp. 151-167.
- Velazquez Hernández, E., 1995. *Cuando los arrieros perdieron sus caminos. La conformación regional del Totonacapan*. Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán.

- Wade, P., 2005. Rethinking 'Mestizaje': Ideology and Lived Experience. *Journal Of Latin American Studies*, 37(2), pp. 239-257.
- Wahrhaftig, A., 1995. *Totonac Cultural Revitalisation: An Alternative to the Zapatistas*. Oakland, California, s.n., p. American Indian Studies Section.
- Warren, K. B. & Jackson, J. E., 2002. *Indigenous Movements, Self-representation and the State in Latin America*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Whorf, B. L., 1935. The Comparative Linguistics of Uto-Aztecan. *American Anthropologist*, 37(4), pp. 600-608.
- William-García, R., 1987. Totonac Religion . In: *Encyclopedia of Religion*. New York: Macmillan.
- Ypeij, A., 2012 . The Intersection of Gender and Ethnic Identities in the Cuzco–Machu Picchu Tourism Industry: Sácamefotos, Tour Guides and Women Weavers. *Latin American Perspectives*, 39/6(187), pp. 17-35.
- Zambardino, R. A., 1980. Mexico's Population in the Sixteenth Century: Demographic Anomaly or Mathematical Illusion?. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 11(1), pp. 1-27.
- Zambrano Bonilla, J., 1752. *Arte de la lengua totonaca, conforme á el Arte de Antonio Lebrija*. Puebla, Mexico: Imprenta de la Viuda de Miguel de Ortega.
- Žižek, S., 2009. *Violence*. London: Profile.
- Zundel, M. & Kokkalis, P., 2010. Theorizing as Engaged Practice. *Organisation Studies*, 31(9&10), pp. 1209-1227.